THE
# ENGLISH REVIEW
MAY 1910

## Four Poems from the Chinese

Rendered by L. Cranmer-Byng

### A KING OF TANG

BY WANG PO

A.D. 648–676

THERE looms a lordly pleasure-tower o'er yon dim shore,
Raised by some King of Tang.
Jade pendants at his girdle clashed, and golden bells
Around his chariot rang.

Strange guests through sounding halls at dawn go trailing by—
Grey mists and mocking winds;
And sullen brooding twilights break in rain on rain
To lash the ragged blinds.

The slow sun-dappled clouds lean down o'er waters blue,
Clear mirrored one by one.
Then drift as all the world shall drift. The very stars
Their timeless courses run.

How many autumn moons have steeped those palace walls!
And paled the shattered beams!
What is their royal builder now? A lord of dust?
An emperor of dreams?



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## THE CONVENT OF SIANG-FU

By LIU CHI

A.D. 1311–1375

So I sprang to horse at cockcrow all a-fever to depart,
Galloped, galloped to the convent, ere the calling bells were still.
Over dimpled lawns a zephyr woke the lily's jewelled heart,
And the moon's faint crescent faltered down the cleft of wooded hill.

Oh, the lonely little convent with its secret haunts of prayer!
With its shadowed cells for dreaming, where Eternities abide!
Down the cedar-scented alley not a footfall stirred the air,
But the monks' low droning echoed in the green gloom far and wide.

## DISAPPOINTMENT

By HAN YU

A.D. 768–824

Still moonlight floods the inner gallery
Where the japonica sets fluttering
Her silvered petals. Languidly
I rise and let my absent glance
Fall where the shadows of the swing
Over the door-step dance.

I am possessed
By spring's rough humid winds that penetrate
The silken curtains of my lonely state,
And cannot rest,
For all my sorrow.
During the night I hear the heavy rain
Crash on the lotus-pool afar.
To-morrow! ah, to-morrow!
The little boat lies swamped that I would fain
Have steered in search of the golden nenuphar.



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## IN EXILE

By TU-FU

A.D. 712–770

Through the green blinds that shelter me
Two butterflies at play—
Four wings of flame whirl joyously
Around me and away;
While swallows breasting to the shore
Ripple the waves they wander o'er.

And I that scan the distant view
Of torn white clouds and mountains blue
Lift to the north my aching eyes;
'Tis there—'tis there the city lies!
Chang-an arise! arise!



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# Two Poems

## By Frederic Manning

### HERA PARTHENIA

Lo ! she awakens again, the flowery Hera, the Maiden :
Break the bewildering beauty, and wonder, and grace of the Spring,
Leading the months of fair colours, wild March with his daffodils laden ;
April of blossoming boughs, fragrant, where nightingales sing
From the deep peace of the woods ; and the valleys, where glimmering reaches
Of radiance lie on the lakes, and the cold crests of the hills
Are white with the foam of her flowers, that is fairer than breaks on the beaches :
All now she clothes with her joy, all with her music fulfils.

Laughs the green earth, and the ocean, exultant with thunder, rejoices ;
Loud is the choir of the winds, sweeping the harp of the woods ;
Filled with her manifold praises are earth's multitudinous voices,
Rain, and the streaming of snows, falling in vehement floods :
Yea ! as she cometh the odour of orchard and garden is shaken
Out of the folds of her raiment, blue as the sea and the skies :
She, who had left us, of sunlight and breath of the flowers, forsaken,
Bends once again upon earth, mild and benignant, her eyes.



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# TWO POEMS

## TO ARTEMIS THE DESTROYER

O Queen of the silent places, and windy skies,
Who rulest the desolate waters, and changing moon,
Shall I seek for pity in thine hard pitiless eyes,
That bend upon me with wrath as the heat of noon ?

Once on the Latmian steep, while a silver mist,
Luminous, veiled thee from mortal eyes, in thine ears,
From the curved melodious lips, that thy lips had kissed,
A voice, whose music was fashioned of fire and of tears,

Prayed thee for healing sleep, and a quiet peace ;
Nor even dreams that ripple the face of sleep
With a shadowy touch : for a sleep that would never cease
Till the whole world slipped, like a dream, to the silent deep.

For of all things surely to man the most perfect boon
Is a loss of being, a calm, and an endless death.
That, only of thee I ask, white Maid of the moon.
That I fail, and fall on the winds as an empty breath.



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# The River Road

## By Filson Young

They wandered blindly through the night,
  Alone and with uncertain feet,
In mist and storm, by deep and height,
  To where the world and heaven meet.

For them thus lost, with none to tell
  The tumult of their doubts and fears,
In twilight before dawn there fell
  The noise of waters on their ears.

They met beside a talking stream
  That tumbled downwards to the world
On slopes where maple, larch, hornbeam,
  The banner of the spring unfurled.

In morning light the earth lay fair,
  And onward through the valley flowed
The ever-widening waters where
  The river ran beside the road.

Through aisles of tulip-trees, alight
  And golden like the noonday sun,
Far and more far, beyond our sight,
  They and the river wandered on. . . .

His firmer hand in hers to hold,
  Her surer feet to choose the way,
Now step they onward to behold
  The glory of the perfect day



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## THE RIVER ROAD

Where never joy need sour to pain,
  Nor clouds obscure the golden west,
Nor any breezes bring again
  The fever of their dark unrest.

Now bear they both a lighter load,
  And follow, listening for the roar
Of waters, where the river road
  Comes out upon the sounding shore;

Where love shall loose from love the chain,
  And self from sting of self be free—
There where the river finds again
  The splendour of the open sea.



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# Three Poems

## By Charles Kinross

### SUMMER

If I into the garden chanced,
  Was it at roots to delve?
The summer haze around me danced,
  The clock half threatened twelve.

Why then did I allow my gaze
  Across the green-crept wall?
In Sunday peace, the sun's white rays
  Seemed fiercer over all.

Dreamed there a maid, dark as the night,
  Yet fair as fair could be,
The trees half hid her from the light,
  Should they hide her from me?

### THE SONG OF THE CLERK

I must waste Summer on despisèd work,
And glorious hours where toilers hidden lurk,
Where Commerce, wide-eyed, unrelenting, sits,
And wields her magic pen o'er manhood's wits.

All this must I, nor know the chatt'ring thrush
Nor see the rose glow in the evening hush,
A slave am I, tied to a desk of toil,
With empty pocket, sowing barren soil.



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Could I but see the end, something content were I :
'Twould something mend the never ceasing lie
Of daily round, fitting another's plan,
Of plunder, rendered to another man.

I work to-day, to-morrow is a guess ;
And when to-morrow comes, then have I less
Than this my day. Gone Spring, and Summer too,
Come Autumn days, what have I *then* to do.

A Winter of lean years, perhaps before the end
A sharp reminder of this world's trend ;
A setting back, a place upon the shelf—
Herein is fate the master—not man's self.

And here is Summer. Is there ne'er a way
Of calling halt to Commerce this same day,
So I may sing a differently loved song,
And watch the sun, nor starve the way along.

## LIFE

I've heard sweet laughter, watched the moving flood of tears,
Yes, I have lived !
And I have tossed the changing glass of hopes and fears
And *still* survived.
I scarce know why, indeed have I forgot to ask,
Nor scarce do care ;
The dancing spectacle of Life, seen through a mask,
Is hard to bear.

Yet, who shall say ? A vision dim of Life
May have been mine ;
A doubtful balance in a doubtful strife,
With ne'er a sign
Of all that's great, of what is just, to cast the odds—
Perchance for *thee*
Is there reserved a gallant hope—perhaps the gods
Are tired of me.



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# The Earlier Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher

By A. C. Swinburne

For any man born only a little lesser than the greatest, a little lower than the angels or the gods of song, it is the heaviest and most enduring of all conceivable misfortunes to have been rated for a time among them if not above them. That a Jephson or a Tate, a Cibber or an Ibsen, should for a moment be compared or preferred to Shakespeare by any howling dervish or laughing jackass of letters is a matter of no moment: that men of genius should ever have been thrust forward as claimants for so ridiculous a promotion is only too certain to impair or to imperil, it may be for only too many generations, the recognition of their genuine claims to honour. That typical Oxonicule, the Rev. William Cartwright, "the most florid and seraphical preacher in the university," not only damned himself to everlasting fame but did what in him lay to damn the reputation of Fletcher by assuring his departed spirit that "Shakespeare to thee was dull," obscene, inartistic, and scurrilous: dull as compared to the author of *The Nice Valour*, obscene as compared to the author of *The Custom of the Country*, inartistic as compared to the author of *The Sea-Voyage*, and scurrilous as compared to the author of *The Scornful Lady*. The criticism is worthy of Matthew Arnold: and even he could not have surpassed it in perversity of cultivated impertinence and audacity of self-erratic conceit. But time has always done justice, when time was needed to do justice, on the academic aberrations of complacent incompetence and overweening culture. It is of far more importance that justice should be done to the victims of their admiration. To be dispraised is nothing: to be



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mispraised may be dangerous. Justice has never been done to Beaumont and Fletcher since the days in which their work was set up against Shakespeare's. It is time to consider so rich and various a treasure as they have bequeathed us without consideration or recollection of the fact that their garnets were once preferred to Shakespeare's rubies, their pearls to his diamonds. No other dramatic treasury can boast of so magnificent a display in quantity, in quality, and in variety of jewels.

It must be allowed that no expert in gems would have given much for the first sample of their workshop. The generous and cordial friendship of Ben Jonson could hardly have applauded so crude and juvenile a study in his school of comedy as *The Woman-Hater*. It is readable, absurd, and amusing: I cannot think that much more can be said for it. The rather dreary and mouldy Spanish tradition of jocularity on the subject of hunger and gluttony revives here in a final renascence of farcical effect which may charitably be found not altogether unworthy of a tolerant rather than of a sympathetic smile: but the protagonist is a mere monomaniac, and the heroine is too eccentric to pass muster except as a type of the very newest and oldest of new women whom we may meet in the pages of Aristophanes or the columns of the *Times*.

In the tragedy of *Thierry and Theodoret* a new touch is felt—a new voice is audible. There is here no trace of Jonson's influence; nor is there any sign of Shakespeare's except in so far as we may say that all subsequent good work in tragedy must inevitably bear witness to the effect of Marlowe's example and of his. For this is good work, as well as new: the impetuous and continuous rush of the fluent and fervent verse is only the outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual ardour, headlong and heedless of reflection or restraint, which impels the writer's genius along its passionate and breathless course. Even if, as has been plausibly suggested, the staider and less vehement hand of Massinger may here and there be traced, this play is on the whole about the finest and the fullest evidence left us of Fletcher's magnificent but far from supreme power as a tragic poet. The men are nothing: at least, they are but rough and rudely coloured sketches. The abnormal wickedness of Brunhalt, the abnormal goodness of



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Ordella, give all the life and interest to the tragic action that readers can ever find in it, or that spectators ever can have found. It is not quite human life: for the interest excited is hardly in human nature. But, such as it is, the interest is unflaggingly sustained, and the style is as admirable in its impulsive fashion as is the style of Marlowe and Shakespeare and Webster in the nobler and more serious manner appropriate to higher and sincerer inspiration.

Something more of such inspiration is perceptible in Philaster: and yet, leaving Shakespeare out of the question, we find here no figures comparable for creative power and living truth to Faustus and Edward, to Vittoria and Bracciano, the Duchess and her brothers. The boyish or feminine incapacity to draw even in outline, to paint even in monochrome, the likeness of a man, which is here so unmistakably displayed, was evidently no evidence of inferior power, no reason for inferior regard, in the estimate of contemporary admiration. Among all their tragic or serious heroes we may look in vain for the life-like figure of a conceivable and acceptable man. A gallant and roistering humorist they could paint better and more delightfully, with more contagious sympathy and more audacious truth, than even the great Dumas himself; but the finest type of heroic manhood imaginable by either is a knight of Malta; an Origen in armour; a hero who renounces manhood. Philaster is something worse: he is hardly the shadow, the phantom, the wraith of a living man. The she-page Bellario is simply the loveliest and most interesting of all dramatic hermaphrodites from Shakespeare's Viola down to Wycherley's Fidelia: it is curious and significant that Beaumont and Fletcher could never create a man or a woman so attractive as this fantastic and pathetic figure, whose unquestionable and inimitable charm of perfect purity and more than manly womanhood threw so strange a fascination over the stage that it was a less outrageously than pardonably extravagant exaggeration of the truth which Lamb allowed himself in the assertion that "for many years after the date of Philaster's first exhibition on the stage scarce a play can be found without one of these women pages in it." Certainly, as he adds, "our ancestors seem to have been wonderfully delighted with these transformations



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of sex." But after all it must be admitted that the vital and enduring fascination of this beautiful and famous play depends less on character or on incident than on the exquisite and living loveliness of the style—most attractive when least realistic, most memorable when least dramatic.

The authors of *The Maid's Tragedy* succeeded in showing themselves at all points superior to the authors of *Philaster*. Their poetic power is equal in charm and more perfectly adapted or subordinated to the demands of dramatic art, the laws of theatrical evolution or construction. That they could not draw even in outline the figure of a man—that a protagonist of heroic mould, such as Marlowe's Faustus or Webster's Virginius, was not only unpresentable but inconceivable by the purely passionate and impulsive nature of their tragic genius—this masterpiece would suffice to prove, even without the evidence of their later tragedies. The heroes, or rather the passive and the braggart figures of manhood proposed for our acceptance as the heroes of the play, are not above the rather lamentable level of Philaster. But the sinners are better than their elders; Pharamond and his Megra are little more than the sketches of a hot-blooded and headlong boy if set against the vivid, vigorous outlines of Evadne and her king. Yet, exquisite though it is as a poem, this famous tragedy is the first example of an English play in which all other considerations are subordinate to the imperious demands, the dominant exactions, of stage effect. Evadne is the one thoroughly credible and thoroughly realised figure in the play: a bad woman who might not have made so bad a man. Of the two heroes it can only be further said that Amintor is abject, and Melantius absurd: the king is now and then as theatrical in villainy as they in virtue, and Aspatia is not so much a woman as a mouthpiece and a subject for poetry incomparable in its kind. Shakespeare and Webster did not find it necessary and did not feel impelled to make their heroines talk so lyrically and evoke from other and minor figures such effusion of elegiac eloquence. In the earlier scenes she says now and then something that could not have been bettered by Webster or even by Shakespeare: but she never has enough of life and truth in her to stand beside "one of Shakespeare's women"—or of Webster's.



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That Fletcher or any of his friends should have thought it probable or possible for *The Faithful Shepherdess* to find favour on the stage is the most wonderful and unimaginable witness we could have to the delight of an English audience in pure and absolute poetry throughout the age of Shakespeare—during the generation that reaches from the sunrise of Marlowe to the sunset of Shirley. That the loveliest of all pastoral plays ever set by fancy in the frame of a fantastic Arcadia should have evoked by its failure such noble tributes of indignant admiration from contemporary poets is an accident which may well be held worthy of rejoicing and thanksgiving by all who believe that sympathy and gratitude rather than defamation and envy are natural to all men not utterly ignoble and all competitors not utterly incompetent. The difference between this poem and Milton's exquisitely imitative *Comus* is the difference between a rose with a leaf or two faded or falling, but still fragrant and radiant, and the faultless but scentless reproduction of a rose in academic wax for the admiration and imitation of such craftsmen as must confine their ambition to the laurels of a college or the plaudits of a school. The figures who play their parts on the woodland stage of this fairy-land theatre are hardly amenable to criticism as actual or possible men and women. The lover whose love is curable by compliance and destructible by the destruction of his idol's ideal inaccessibility would be absurdly misplaced in the world of comedy or tragedy: in the world of fancy, a world made up of poetic artifice and tradition, he is a perfectly appropriate and coherent figure, native to his fantastic element. To the same world the constant Clorin and the wanton Cloe so unmistakably belong that the serious application of an ethical standard to their conduct or their characters is as inept as a poet's objection to the unimaginative realism of mathematics or a mathematician's to the sterile impotence of poetry if applied to the proof of a theorem or the solution of a problem. The most exquisitely appreciative and the most nearly infallible of critics fell surely for once into inconsistent partiality and untenable paradox when he objected to the contrast of the lascivious with the virginal shepherdess on the score that "such weeds by juxtaposition do not



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set off but kill sweet flowers," and defended the outrageous obscenities of *The Virgin Martyr* on the plea that they "have a strength of contrast, a raciness, and a glow in them which set off the religion of the rest, somehow as Caliban serves to show Miranda." Such dunghill weeds as those were never planted or watered by Fletcher.

It is curious from the historic or literary point of view that the first burlesque ever presented on our stage should still be so very much the best. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is at least as superior to *The Rehearsal* at all points as the fifth act of *The Chances* substituted by the author of *The Rehearsal*, for Fletcher's original fifth act is superior in dramatic force, character, and humour to that hasty and headlong scrawl of a sketch. The seemingly incongruous interfusion of serious and sometimes noble poetry might have been expected to destroy the broad comic effect of parody and raillery which it actually heightens. The good old city poet whose Cockney heroics it made no unkindly fun of, and whose homely power of pathetic realism was a quality altogether beyond the reach of Beaumont or of Fletcher, might have smiled without wincing at so good-humoured and hurtless a caricature of his counter-jumping paladins.

In theatrical magnificence of incident and effect *A King and No King* is as supreme a triumph as is *Othello* or *King Lear* in poetic sublimity and spiritual intensity of truth made manifest and awful in beauty as in terror to all ages of mankind. To say that there is nothing more in it would be shamefully and stupidly false: there is much beautiful writing and much brilliant vivacity of charm. But all serious study of character, all rational or moral evolution of conduct, is wantonly if not shamelessly sacrificed to the immediate effect of vehement if not sometimes galvanic sensation or surprise. The outrages on human possibility in the parts of Gobrias and Arane, the magnanimous murderess in design and the virtuous promoter of a supposedly incestuous passion, would have been impossible to any other poet and even to any other playwright of genius in any way comparable either with Beaumont or with Fletcher. That any soldier king was ever such a blatant braggart and swaggering swashbuckler as Arbaces might surely have been questioned, as now perhaps it may not be, in the days of the poets



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who decked out his crazy and feather-headed vanity with the splendid plumage of rhetorical rhapsody which, as Macaulay long since observed, so singularly anticipates the discoveries of modern mechanism.

The peculiar boyishness which distinguishes alike the tragic and the comic genius of Beaumont and Fletcher, but more especially the tragic work of Fletcher and the comic work of Beaumont, displays itself most amusingly in the once-famous parts of the three beaten braggarts which in their day were classed with the incomparable figure of Bobadil. The far from subtle or exquisite humour of kicking and cudgelling may have been caught from the example of their illustrious friend and occasional model, Ben Jonson: but the lightness of touch, the buoyancy of burlesque, must be allowed to give it a tone of contagious pleasantry which the heavier hand of the more serious artist has not given and perhaps did not care to give. The veriest horseplay of farce in the broadest scenes of Beaumont and Fletcher has more of good-humour and harmless or anyhow spiteless merriment than is to be looked for in the elaborate and deliberate brutality of such an unsavoury masterpiece as *The Silent Woman*.

The eccentric tragedy of *Cupid's Revenge* has always been a butt for the shafts of sarcasm rather than criticism. It is certainly somewhat grotesque, and amorphous if not abnormal; we cannot be surprised that both Campbell and Dyce should have dismissed it with a bitter word of scorn. But a far greater than they or than any other critic of our great dramatic poets has not only embalmed its noblest passages in the deathless amber of a priceless volume, but has selected it for the supreme honour of a condensed rendering into narrative prose after the fashion of his incomparable *Tales from Shakespeare*. The rough and ready improvisation which reduces to a far lower level all the huddled and headlong later part of the play is as evidently due to enforced haste or natural weariness of the work in hand as is the inferiority of the latter part of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* to the magnificent beauty and power of its opening scenes. To imagine in either or in any such case the necessary or the probable intervention or intrusion of a foreign hand and a



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feebler touch is a facile and uncritical evasion rather than explanation of a problem suggested by the naturally inevitable inequality of the finished parts with the hurried parts of even a great writer's work, when casually compelled to write against time for the stage or for any other pulpit or tribune required for the utterance of whatever he has to say. But no pantomimic absurdity in the opening and no convulsive debility in the closing scenes of the play can efface or should be allowed to affect the impression of the two scenes between Leucippus and his mistress before and after his chivalrous and mendacious affirmation of her virtue has resulted, during his absence at the seat of war, in her marriage with his father: a situation treated with characteristic frankness, but handled with exceptional delicacy. It may be remembered that Mr. Samuel Pepys, on August 17, 1668, "saw *Cupid's Revenge*, under the new name of *Love Despised*, that hath something very good in it, though I like not the whole body of it." The somewhat eccentric judge who preferred Tuke as a dramatic poet to Shakespeare at his very highest was on this occasion exactly and excellently right. He and Lamb ("Powers eternal! such names mingled!") have alone been just in their expressed or implied judgment of this otherwise unlucky play.

There are some pretty lines thrown away here and there on the not very brilliant masque in celebration of the ill-omened nuptials of Prince Rupert's ill-starred mother; but Beaumont would perhaps have done as well to leave such work to the stronger and more inventive hand of his friend Ben Jonson, whose influence for good and evil, or at least for better and for worse, is evident in Beaumont's part of the *Four Plays in One*, which we must regret to remember as the only surviving example of a form of dramatic entertainment to which a horrible as well as terrible little work of relentless and realistic genius never to be unquestioningly rejected from the Shakespearean Apocrypha must pretty certainly be admitted to belong. From what context of companion plays or playlets such an inhuman or at least such a merciless masterpiece of condensed and concentrated horror as *A Yorkshire Tragedy* can have been detached by its publisher or its author no imaginable student above the lowest



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level of brainless and frontless duncery will care or will presume to conjecture. In the present unique instance it would not be difficult for the youngest possible reader of average intelligence to distinguish and to determine the parts assignable to Beaumont from the parts assignable to Fletcher. The Jonsonian induction is Beaumont's: he was never worse employed than in imitation of his great friend Ben: *exemplar vitiis imitabile* if ever there was one. No one but a poet born could have written *The Triumph of Honour;* though he could only have written it during a transitory eclipse or collapse of his better powers; no one but an imitator of Ben Jonson when least happily inspired could have scribbled the farcical part of it. *The Triumph of Love* should have been a beautiful and pathetic play instead of a beautiful and pathetic sketch: but as it is we must gladly acknowledge that one lovely scene in it has been overpraised neither by Charles Lamb nor by Leigh Hunt. *The Triumph of Death*, in which there certainly is no suggestion of loveliness or pathos, is a superb example of Fletcher's vehement and fervent though neither gentle nor sublime genius for passionate and headlong tragedy. *The Triumph of Time* is a survival of the unfittest—a revival of the obsolete morality play, not improved by a dash of the contemporary masque. It is by no means worthless: but its author would probably have been the first to admit that it was not worth very much.

The noble and cordial verses in which Ben Jonson expressed the fervour of his love for a younger friend who had shown such religious devotion towards him should be borne in mind by the reader who cannot but think that the "religion" so affectionately acknowledged and so generously requited did not bring forth any very sweet or savoury fruit in the rather too Jonsonian comedy of *The Scornful Lady*. In all the curious and interesting history of opinion—of moral and intellectual change and progress and reaction—there is nothing more singular than the variations of view among intelligent and honourable men as to decency and indecency, morality and immorality. It must surely be now incomprehensible to any student of letters or of ethics that so unquestionably good and true a man as Dr. Johnson should have denounced the noble and natural story of *Tom Jones* as a



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"corrupt" book, and agreed with the clergy of his day in commending to decent readers the infamous and abominable story of *Pamela*. If the one is sometimes blunt, the other is always vile. *The Scornful Lady* is, of course, not so ignoble and impure an abortion of immorality as Richardson's shamelessly shameful book; and in a rough way it is a vigorous and memorable example of the very broadest comedy: but alike in matter and in manner, in language and in character, it is undeniably the coarsest work of its authors. And yet it was so long held comparatively blameless that this particular discredit has generally been transferred to a far less offensive work of more graceful if still somewhat graceless audacity in treatment and in humour. Even Wycherley, if at his worst more basely and brutally immoral, was hardly more impudent in theatrical invention or device of daringly and undeniably comic effect.

The strange and straggling tragi-comedy of *The Coxcomb* is as unadvisedly and as singularly misnamed from the idiotic protagonist of the uninterestingly extravagant underplot as is a far more memorable example of dramatic poetry, the masterpiece at once of Middleton and of Rowley which was somehow most absurdly misbaptized as *The Changeling*. In the gentle and devoted heroine of the more serious part there is a touch of simplicity and sweetness in devotion and submission of daring and of patience which distinguishes her as a daughter of Beaumont's genius from the more vehement and voluble children of Fletcher's. Another play which is no less obviously a compound work, not less interesting and not less insufficient to satisfy a serious and grateful admirer of their sometimes rather idle and irregular genius, is *The Honest Man's Fortune*. The hero is a nobler and manlier type of manhood than any of Fletcher's when left to work by himself; but the movement and ease and spontaneity of the action in all but his very worst and hastiest and most puerile plays, if not even in those rather pitiful puerilities of invention and execution, will hardly be found in this more serious and ambitious poem. The two heroines are admirably sketched rather than admirably painted: but the simplicity and nobility of nature apparent and consistent in them both would be not less hard to find in the more theatrical and



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conventional heroines of Fletcher's later plays. There are noble passages and magnificent couplets in the little poem appended to this play: it would be difficult if not impossible to match them for moral dignity and for majesty of expression in any other work of Fletcher's: but few readers will probably agree with Leigh Hunt that they suffice to corroborate or to justify the expressed regret of Coleridge that Beaumont and Fletcher had not devoted their genius and their time to writing poems rather than to writing plays.

The ingrained and ineradicable juvenility of mind which distinguishes them from all other men of true and splendid genius is or should be at once apologetically and amusingly patent if not obvious to the readers of that admirably written comedy so childishly misnamed *The Captain:* misnamed from a Jonsonian figure of farce who is once happily humanised by generous sympathy and pity for the supposed sufferings of an elder soldier. The monstrous and abnormal criminality of the almost incredible heroine is more like the impudent fancy of a naughty boy than the corrupt imagination of a depraved man. But so bright and lively a piece of work would in common scholastic justice be set down so decidedly to the youngster's credit as to be deservedly set against the discredit if not the disgrace due to the juvenile audacity of his immature imagination. And the first scene of cajolery in which the woman's magnificent art of passionate hypocrisy is brought to bear upon a half-conscious and half-reluctant victim, a would-be dupe who cannot dupe himself, is finer than anything I know of the kind in prose or poetry before the advent of Balzac's almighty and ever-living Valérie. Madame Marneffe is as matchless as Madame de Merteuil: but the patrician or the plebeian she-devil of immortal fiction might have given a smile of sympathy if not a hand of sisterhood to the hardly less terrible harlot of an English poet's invention.

In the magnificent melodrama or tragi-comedy of *The Little French Lawyer* it would be impossible to overpraise the brilliancy of invention, the deftness of composition, or the splendour of execution: but the brutality of boyhood is as evident as its joyfulness. From any other hand the ruffianly insolence which derides the infirmity of a veteran hero in the public street



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would be unendurable and unpardonable; but here the merciless infidelity of the bride who has played false to her earlier and younger lover makes it intelligible if inexcusable. And here the incomparable and inimitable lightness of touch which impairs the tragic work and glorifies the comic work of Fletcher must be allowed by all intelligent or æsthetic judges to redeem the offence which would else be given to the moral or ethical critic of the superb result or outcome of his weakness and his strength —his inevitable limitations and his magnificent capacities. The juvenile horseplay of practical jokes which animates at once the serious comedy and the rampant farce of this dazzling and delightful poem, a poem in which no alloy of grave or of humorous prose can anywhere be found latent or apparent contrives in some inexplicable if not inexcusable but bewitching if not irresistible fashion to succeed somehow in fusing them together with such instinctive alchemy of inspiration as to yield by way of product or result a deathless if not blameless masterpiece of comic poetry.

It is impossible to imagine that the author of this most brilliant and buoyant and high-spirited piece of work can have had anything to do, or that his even more glorious friend and compeer can have had anything to do, with one of the dullest and feeblest plays surviving—another survival of the unfittest —from the marvellous and matchless harvest of their time. The Apocrypha of the Scripture bequeathed to us by Beaumont and Fletcher may be more easily and more decisively tested and gauged and disposed of than the Apocrypha of Shakespeare's. That the bright and pleasant comedy of *The Widow* is Middleton's work alone will hardly be questioned by any reader whose time would not be better spent on even the most futile of employments or diversions than in the study of poetic or comic drama: and the most conscientious examination will only find in *The Faithful Friends* a passage or a verse here and there which may charitably be thought not quite bad enough for an old Sharpham or a new Shakespeare. It is perhaps not so utterly worthless and hopeless a failure as *Cupid's Whirligig* or *Thomas Lord Cromwell*. But it is sad stuff.

The riotous and outrageous farce of *Wit at Several Weapons*



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is such a play as might conceivably have been written in his nonage by a bastard son of Ben Jonson who had inherited more of the worse than of the better qualities, intellectual and moral, of his illustrious father. Even Ben, whose indignant humour so often concerned itself with crime, would hardly have introduced at the very opening of the action as a figure of pure comedy a veteran in villainy who boasts to his own son of his early successes as a professional pimp, and his later gains by the robbery and ruin of little children confided to his guardianship. This is the most seriously and odiously revolting passage in all the various and voluminous work of these great dramatic poets—or of any that I can remember among their fellows. And this comes of taking life and character too lightly and too stagily. The play is throughout a very slight and rather childish piece of work, with some touches in it of fun rather than of humour—unless there be humour in a schoolboys' pillow-fight. But the intended fun of the opening could only seem funny to an exceptionally ill-conditioned schoolboy. It is only fair to add that some of the heroine's tricks and shifts to rid herself of an idiot suitor and attract a hesitating lover are really not unworthy to remind the reader of Molière in his broader and rougher mood of practical pleasantry.

The genius of Beaumont and Fletcher for pure comedy was at its nadir in *Wit at Several Weapons:* in *Wit Without Money* it rises easily and visibly to its radiant zenith. The matchless instinct of expression, the incomparable lightness of touch, which distinguishes its best work from all other triumphs of poetic comedy in the language, carries off and sweeps away all too curious or serious consideration of character or conduct. But indeed, if the protagonist is a somewhat too extravagant figure of humorous extravagance when he joyously makes away with his brother's fortune as well as his own, the younger brother is so noble a fellow when he refuses to resent his ruin, or to forget the finer qualities of his reckless and rapacious elder, that this single figure should suffice to confute all charges ever brought against his creator or his twin creators on the score of immoral incompetence to conceive or to present a morally attractive and admirable young English hero. Even Shakespeare—to say



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nothing of Jonson, who in this race is quite out of the running —can show no other to be set beside him.*

The curious laxity with which educated and able men will fling about epithets when engaged in critical comment is rather singularly exemplified in the terms applied by Dyce as well as by Hallam to so magnificent a work of comic and tragic genius as *The Custom of the Country*. Dryden's previous attack on it as compared with his own dirty and greasy comedies and those of his brighter but not less unsavoury rivals may be dismissed with a brief expression of regret that so great a writer should have shown himself so small a critic—so stupidly shameless in misjudgment alike from the moral or ethical and from the intelligent or æsthetic point of view. "The very grossest" (as Mr. Dyce unhappily miscalls it) of all these plays is beyond all question *The Scornful Lady*. *The Custom of the Country* is certainly almost as audacious a comic poem as is even the alarmingly fearless and morally rather than immorally impudent *Lysistrata:* but coarse or obscene it is not. There is not a dirty word in it: not a touch, not a whiff, of Swiftian or Carlylesque impurity. The serious or tragic part is altogether noble in tone and attractive in appeal to sympathy with the heroism of manly constancy and maidenly love, of womanly chivalry and motherly passion: and if the humour of the most humorous parts is undeniably what a schoolboy reader would admit to be "cheeky," the gravity which could resist or abstain from laughter while reading it could only be possible to an unsexed or antisexual reader—a Sporus or a Socrates, an Abelard or a Plato.

When some forgotten fool observed to Byron that Italian was an easy language, the supreme and final and unapproachable master of serio-comic poetry replied with unusual good sense and accuracy: "A very easy language to know badly; a very difficult language to know well." It would be no less easy to

* Why Frank should be sometimes called Francisco is as insoluble a mystery as why the word "else," a word as necessary to the sense as to the metre, should have been persistently omitted by all editors in the penultimate scene of this comedy. "Do not allure me," says Valentine, when secure of his bride,

"Thou art no widow of this world (else)!"

Without this obvious little word the line is immetrical nonsense.



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pass judgment on Fletcher as a tragic poet in a sweeping and summary fashion: it is certainly no less difficult to adjust the due balance of praise and blame, whether positive or comparative, which must determine the verdict to be passed on the admirable though anything but impeccable author of such tragedies as *Bonduca*, *Valentinian*, and *The Double Marriage*. Brilliant even to splendour, ardent even to satiety, they most indisputably are. That their somewhat hectic and feverish glory cannot endure a moment's comparison with the sunlight or the starlight of Shakespeare's, of Marlowe's, and of Webster's, is anything but a reproach to a poet whose fame, if eclipsed, is not and can never be effaced by theirs.

The dazzling tragedy of *Bonduca* is half lit up by the flame of the footlights and half by the radiance of a magnificent if uncertain day. That it wanes and withers into the dusk of an autumnal sunset before the deathless dawn of Tennyson's almost Æschylean *Boadicea* can only be acknowledged as inevitable. That more than one or two of his contemporaries might have made out of the subject a far more perfect and a far sublimer poem is as certain as that none of them could have turned it to such triumphant account from the not ignobly theatrical point of view. But the reader of Fletcher's tragedies can never quite get away from the besetting sense of the theatre. In this, instance the incongruous and excessive admixture or immixture of broad and not always brilliant comedy deforms and degrades the tragic beauty of the nobler scenes. The death-scene is splendid and memorable: but while reading it we must not remember such another and more magnificent example of poetic tribute to the sacred and heroic virtue of suicide in face of shame as Marston had set in the immolation of his Sophonisba. The best by far of Fletcher's martial heroes is Caratach: and his nephew is a much finer and more natural youngster than Shakespeare's far less life-like and lovable Arthur in *King John*: who would have made us reasonably doubt whether the omnipotent hand of his creator could have created a living little boy if it had not left us at a later date the incomparable and unapproachable and adorable figure of Mamillius.

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# A Reminiscence

## By Maurice Hewlett

I HAVE no recollections of anything worth the name which confronted my consciousness before I was ten years old. For aught I know I may have been a pupa until then; but from that time onwards I can gather now with ease indication of a growing and enlarging atmosphere, of beating and pulsing in the air, of excitement, first nervous, then more clearly physical, of entering upon a period of great promise. From my tenth to my thirteenth year I ought to have been an interesting child, and I certainly was so to myself. After that the prison-house shades closed over my head, and I slept.

I had many bad qualities, if qualities they can be called, of which I need only mention three. I was moody, irresolute and hatefully reserved. The last of these drove me back upon myself and left me helpless victim to the other two. Swept, emptied, flooded, washed by surges of impulse or left stranded by ebbings of courage, I suffered, little wretch, the torments of the damned; but as a set-off, or perhaps as a consequence, I had very strongly the power of impersonation, and was or could be, deeply within my own entity, a dozen different persons in a day. Not only did I read voraciously, but I assimilated and embodied. I knew Nelson's ardour, Wellesley's phlegm; I had Napoleon's monomania, Garibaldi's altruism, Galahad's purity, Lancelot's passion, Tristram's amorous melancholy. I reasoned (to myself) like Socrates, and persuaded myself like St. Paul. I was by turns Don Juan and Don Quixote, Tom Jones and Philosopher Square, Hamlet and his Uncle, young Shandy and his. Yet to my parents, brothers, and sisters I was none of these people and showed none of their fine symptoms, but was, rather, an incalculable creature, often lethargic and mostly in the sulks. To



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my father I could not speak, to my mother I did not; the others, being my juniors, hardly existed for me. I lived a secret life, full of terrors, wonders, frantic enterprise, while to all appearance I was mooning in idleness, or walking dully but obediently the way I was bid. I read exorbitantly from my ninth year, and wrote out copious, specious imitations of the book of the moment. But all this by fits. My real habit was of reverie, and my apparent habit best described by a tutor who reported me at home, I remember, as "apathetic and indifferent." So indeed I must have appeared to the poor devil, but so I never appeared to myself. If it had been possible to him or any other person, my senior, to share with me my daily adventures, he might have had a very different tale to tell, and I in turn might have conquered the timidity from which I suffered such terrible defeats; but it was not at all possible. I was eldest of a large family, my parents had other things to do. They had no time, and no reason, to make advances. I had no desire. I fancy that I gave very little trouble, was what they call a tractable child, even to things of the mind. I adored my mother by convention as well as in fact; I feared, but respected, my father. I held it my duty to love all my kinsfolk, and would have undertaken, as bound, to go to the stake for any one of them. Whether I should have got there without being carried is another matter. I dreaded pain, I believe, more than anything in the world. Pain, as interpreted to a child by the imagination, ceases to be physical, and becomes mental torture of the most terrible kind. I beg the reader's pardon for all this egotistical preamble; but there seems no way of putting before him the case of what I saw, or thought I saw, unless he knows beforehand what sort of a seer I was.

The difficulty for me and the reader is to differentiate between what I imagined and what I actually perceived. Ordinarily in those days, my eyes were of very little use to me. It was a favourite string of my father's lyre that I had none. He was himself a great walker, a poet, a lover and a student of Nature. Every Sunday of his life he took me and my brother for a long tramp—sport to him, but terrible to me. The intense spiritual fatigue of the exercise I should never be able



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to describe. I saw nothing, I said nothing, I did nothing but plug one dull foot after the other. I could not even pretend to be somebody else. My brother, whose nature was much happier than mine, who dreamed much less and observed much more, was the life of those excursions. Without him I don't think my father could possibly have taken me; at least, he never did. For my mother, walking with her almost daily through the week, I was a better companion. I could sometimes tell her who, at that moment, I actually was, and she had the spirit and tact to enter into the thing, to take a part, or suggest developments. But in neither case did I use my eyes upon my actual surroundings. The birds, the flowers, the trees, the waters did not exist for me. People passed or stood at their doorways: I never saw them. If by chance I descried somebody coming whom it would be necessary to salute, or to whom I might have to speak, I turned aside to avoid him. I was shy to a fault, like all diffident children, and the world of sense was either a stumbling-block or a thing negligible. I am justified, then, in saying that what I did observe with my eyes must almost certainly have been observable. That I enhanced it afterwards in my fancy is likely enough, but there, bodily, it must have been.

The first time I ever saw a fairy, as we call them, a creature, that is, only accidentally of our world, was in the late autumn of my twelfth year. I was to be twelve in the coming January; my brother was nine, my sister eight years old. We three had been out walking with our mother, and were returning in the damp chill of gathering dusk through a wood which covered the top of a chalk down in West Kent. I knew—I know to this day—every step of that wood. I remember its carpet of sodden leaves under bare branches, the pale, frosty sky seen by glimpses overhead, the sudden shiver that beset us all as the crimson and enormous globe of the sun disappeared; and how, when we emerged into the open, we saw the village below shrouded under chimney smoke, and afar off one or two twinkling lights already dotted here and there about the dim wold. Peculiar to me, I believe, is the vivid recollection of the friendliness of these accustomed sights. But there's reason for that.

It had been twilight in the wood and very damp. Perhaps



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I had been tired, more likely bored. I was always bored when I was not being somebody else; and I remember that I had found the path interminable. I had been silent while the other two had chattered and played about our mother; and when presently I stayed behind for a purpose, feeling myself an alien and a solitary, I made no effort to catch them up. I knew the way by heart and had no fear of the dark. That was one of the few things I was not afraid of. Besides, by the time I was ready to go after them, I had something else to think about.

I must have been looking at him quite a while before I made him out, or was conscious of him. As children will, I had stayed longer than I need, looking and wondering into the wood. The trees in that part of it were all sapling chestnuts—Spanish chestnuts, used for hop-poles in those parts. The leaf of that tree has a way of decaying which leaves the articulations bare, like skeletons. Some of these, still clinging to the boughs, wagged about in the light air of the place where I was; the ground was densely carpeted with others in the same state or fast becoming so. A silver-grey vista of light reflected from them, hatched by the slim purple lines of the stems, appeared through the blue air of the evening and drowned itself at last in the creeping white of the ground damp. Looking into all this, without realising it, I presently realised instead the thing that was there in the midst of it.

It was under a clump of chestnut stems, kneeling, sitting on its heels, watching me with the bright quick eyes of a mouse. If I was to say that my first thought was of some peering and waiting animal I should go on to explain the thought by reference to the creature's eyes. They were eyes which, like all animals', could only express one thing at a time. They expressed now attention, the closest; not fear, not surprise, not apprehension of anything that I might be meditating against their peace, but simply minute attention. The absence of fear, no doubt, marked their owner off from the animals of common acquaintance, but the fact that they did not at the same time express the being itself showed him to be different from our human breed. For whatever else the human pair of eyes may reveal, it reveals the looker.



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The eyes of this creature revealed nothing of itself except that it was watching me narrowly. I could not even be sure of its sex, though I believe it to have been a male. I could see that he was young; I thought, about my own age. He was very pale, without being at all sickly—indeed, health and vigour and extreme vivacity were implicit in every line and expressed in every act; clear-skinned but colourless. The shadow under his chin, I remember, was bluish. His eyes were round, when not narrowed by the closeness of his scrutiny of me, and though probably brown, showed to be all black, with pupil indistinguishable from iris; his hair was dense, wild and rather long. It covered his ears, and touched his shoulders. It was pushed from his forehead sideways in a thick fold, as if it had been the corner of a frieze cape thrown back. It was dark hair, not black; his neck was very thin. I don't know how he was dressed —I never noticed such things; but in colour he must have been inconspicuous, since I had been looking at him for a good time without seeing him at all. I don't know. But his knees were bare—that I remember, and his arms were bare from the shoulder.

I standing, he squatting on his heels, the pair of us looked full at one another. I was not frightened; no more was he. I was excited and full of interest: so I think was he. My heart beat double time.

Then I saw that between his knees he held a rabbit, and that with his left hand he had it by the throat. Now, what is extraordinary about this discovery, to me, is that there was nothing shocking in it.

I saw the rabbit's wild and panic-blown eye—I saw the bright white rim of it, recognised its terror of me even in the midst of its anguish. It was not till I saw its mouth horribly open, its lips turned back to show its shelving teeth that I could have guessed at what it was suffering. Its captor was squeezing its throat. I saw what I had never seen before, and have never seen since, I saw its tongue like a pale pink petal of a flower dart out as the pressure drove it. Revolting sight as that should have been to me, witnessed i n the world—that is in *my* world here, in this dark wood, in this outland presence, it was nothing



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but curious. Now, as I watched and wondered, the being, following my eyes' direction, looked down at the huddled thing between his thighs, and just as children squeeze a snap-dragon flower to make it open and shut its mouth, so precisely did he, pressing or releasing the wind-pipe, cause the poor beast to throw back its lips and dart its dry tongue. He did this many times while he watched it; and when he looked up at me again, and while he continued to look at me, I saw that his cruel fingers, as by habit, continued the torture, and that in some way he derived pleasure from the performance—as if it gratified him to be sure that effect was following on cause inevitably.

I had never, I believe, been cruel to an animal in my life. I hated cruelty, as I do now. Yet the fact is that not only did I nothing to interfere in what I saw going on but that I was deeply interested and absorbed in it. I can only explain that to myself, now, by supposing that I knew, then, that the creature in front of me was not of my kind, and was not, in fact, outraging any law of its own being. Is not that possible? May I not have collected unawares so much out of created nature as to be able to infer diverse laws for divers orders? I am unable to say: all I am clear about is that here was a thing in the semblance of a boy doing what I had never dreamed a boy could do; here, that is, was a thing in the semblance of a boy which was no boy at all. So much was as certain to me then as it is indisputable now.

One doesn't at that age reason things out; one knows them, and is dumb, though unconvinced, before powerful syllogisms to the contrary. All children are so, confronted by strange phenomena. And yet I had facts to go upon if, child as I was, I had been capable of inference. I need only mention one. If this creature had been human, upon seeing that I was conscious of its behaviour to the rabbit, it would either have stopped the moment it perceived that I did not approve, or was not amused, or it would have continued deliberately, out of bravado. But it neither stopped nor hardily continued. It watched the experiment with interest for a little, then, finding me more interesting, did not discontinue it, but ceased to watch it. He went on with it mechanically, dreamingly, as if to the excitation of some other sense than sight, that of feeling, for instance.



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He went on lasciviously, for the sake of the pleasure to be had. In other words, being without self-consciousness and ignorant of shame, he must have been non-human.

After all, too, it must be said that I cannot have been confronted by the appearance for more than a few minutes. Allow me three to have been spent before I was aware of him, three more will be the outside I can have passed gazing at him. I should have been much longer there, no doubt, had I not been interrupted. A woodman, homing from his work, came heavily up the path, and like a guilty detected rogue I turned to run. Not till I had passed the man did I think to look back. The partner of my secret was not then to be seen. Out of sight out of mind, is the way of children. I hurried on, ran, and overtook my party half-way down the bare hill-side. I still remember the feeling of relief with which I swept into the light, felt the cold air on my cheeks, and saw the intimacy of the village open out below me. I am almost sure that my eyes held tears at the assurance of the sweet, familiar things which I knew and could love. These, literally, were my own people: that which I had left behind must be unlawful because it was so strange. In the warmth and plenty of the lighted house, by the schoolroom table, before the cosy-covered teapot, the high talk, the hot toast and the jam, my experience in the dusky wood seemed unreal, lawless, almost too horrible to be remembered; never, never to be named. It haunted me for many days, and gave rise to curious wonderings now and then. As I passed the patient, humble beasts of common experience—a carter's team nodding, jingling its brasses, a patient donkey hobbled in a paddock, dogs sniffing each other, a cat tucked into a cottage window, I mused doubtfully and often whether indeed we had touched the threshold of the heart of their mystery. But for the most part, being constitutionally timid, I was resolute to put the experience out of mind. When next I chanced to go through the wood, there was no doubt I peered askance to right and left among the trees; but I took good care not to desert my companions. That which I had seen was unaccountable, therefore out of bounds, nefast, wicked. But though I never saw him there again, I have never forgotten him.



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# "The Women of Shakespeare"

By Frank Harris

In his famous introduction to *La Comédie Humaine* Balzac puts his finger on the weakest place in English literature. He is astonished that Scott, who paints men so bravely and has left such excelling portraits as Balfour of Burleigh and Caleb Balderstone should have painted women so feebly—presenting them as the skimmed milk, so to speak, of humanity.

He explains the fact by the upas-like influence of Puritanism which he compares to its disadvantage with Catholicism. Balzac might have gone a step farther back, one fancies, and traced the peculiarities of the creed to racial characteristics. Tacitus was the first to notice the extraordinary chastity of the Germanic peoples; he was surprised by the value they put upon this virtue. It is this hardness in the German paste, this dislike to yield to "languishing love" which is responsible, I imagine, for the paucity and poverty of women portraits in German and English literature. The most representative English novel, and one of the greatest, *Robinson Crusoe*, has no love in it whatever; it is of adventurous daring and practical details all compact, and one can hardly think of our typical English heroines, the blameless, bloodless Eves, Amelias, Sophies, Amys, and Maggies without a smile. Becky Sharp even is sacrificed to the author's puritanism; the green-eyed courtesan is depicted without a soul and so remains a superb caricature. In no other literature would poets like Milton, Byron, Wordsworth have passed through life without leaving a single woman's portrait worth remembering.

It is curious, too, that only the greatest in German literature has painted a woman with any intimate understanding: Goethe's *Gretchen* is a masterpiece, and his *Mignon* is at least a fine attempt



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to realise a still higher ideal. It will be of some interest to consider what Shakespeare has done in this field, and judge whether his portraits of women are worthy to rank with Manon Lescaut, and Madame Bovary, Gretchen, and Francesca. Our home critics, of course, put him above comparison, and will rattle you off the names of a dozen Rosalinds and Perditas and Imogens with endless strings of laudatory epithets; but beautiful names cannot always stand for portraits, nor praise for critical appreciation, and it may be worth while once to test the matter scrupulously, for a study of it will certainly throw an intense light on Shakespeare's mind and growth.

In the course of these essays it will be seen whether the view of Shakespeare's nature which I have put forth in my book *The Man Shakespeare* is corroborated or weakened, whether the incidents of his life which I have accepted as true are further established or thrown into doubt, and above all it must now become clear whether I am trying to bend stubborn facts to fit a fantastic theory, as my critics contend, or whether, having caught a glimpse of the truth or deduced it almost unconsciously from a thousand facts, I now find on further examination hundreds of other facts springing up on all sides to buttress and confirm it.

If we can judge Shakespeare at all by his first work, by the *Venus and Adonis*, it must be admitted that he started life with a most generous endowment of sensuality, and if we are to believe tradition, and all tradition concurs on this point, he was himself, not only handsome and well-shaped, but very gentle and courteous with most ingratiating manners, likely, therefore, to love women and be loved by them. Because I have made this statement elsewhere, I have been accused of blasphemy and vilification in reputable English journals. I have pictured Shakespeare as "a brute" said a gentleman in *The Bookman*, and another in *The Daily Chronicle* declared that Shakespeare's sensuality was all of my seeing, a figment of my diseased imagining.

One rubs one's eyes and wonders if these critics have ever read *Venus and Adonis;* it is the most passionate love-song in the language; more intense even than Marlowe's *Hero and Leander;* more sensual than the most sensual verse of



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Swinburne; bare lust is pictured in it with greater detail and keener delight than in any other English poem.

Take the following passage:

> Now quick desire hath caught the yielding prey,
> And glutton-like she feeds, yet never filleth;
> Her lips are conquerors, his lips obey,
> Paying what ransom the insulter willeth;
> Whose vulture thought doth pitch the price so high,
> That she will draw his lips' rich treasure dry:
>
> And having felt the sweetness of the spoil
> With blindfold fury she begins to forage;
> Her face doth reek and smoke, her blood doth boil,
> And careless lust stirs up a desperate courage. . . .

*Venus and Adonis* was immediately popular: it ran through edition after edition, and gave Shakespeare place as a poet. Its astonishing success serves to paint the age. As one says: "It was the delight of young lovers." "Pupillus" in *The Noble Stranger* wanted it "to court his mistress by."* A severer criticism, however, made itself heard: one wished to see Shakespeare's sweet verse with its "heart-throbbing life" applied to "a graver subject": another, like Gabriel Harvey, turned from the *Venus and Adonis* in which "the younger sort take much delight" to *Lucrece*. The curious thing is that the next poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*, first published in the following year, 1594, though praised at the time as both "sweet and chaste," is every whit as passionately conceived as *Venus and Adonis*. The rape is imagined as nakedly in the chaste poem and with the same lingering enjoyment as is shown in the wooing of Venus in the love-song. English critics would be put to it to explain this; but they prefer to believe that a man can outdo all others in picturing sensuality without being himself sensual. It is my "assumption," if you please, that the qualities seen in the painting must of necessity exist in the painter.

Shakespeare calls *Venus and Adonis* "the first heir of his invention." Professor Herford, who has edited the Eversley

* *Venus and Adonis* was like those books which Horace says were to be found under the silk cushions of the Roman ladies:

> Nec non libelli stoici inter sericos
> Jacere pulvillos amant.



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edition for Messrs. Macmillan, which I happen to have under my hand at the moment, declares that he "probably meant that it was his first lyrical or narrative poem, and not that it preceded all his plays." I prefer to take Shakespeare's plain words and abide by them. *Venus and Adonis* was first published in 1593; but may have been written half a dozen years before. I catch a breath of the English country in it and am inclined to believe with Coleridge, that Shakespeare wrote it "in the country" before coming to London, though he may have recast it after 1590; for in that year the first instalment of *The Faerie Queen* appeared and Lodge's *Glaucus and Silla*, which was written in the same six-line stanza with alternation of quatrain and couplet.

I have suggested elsewhere that this passionate picture of an older woman loving and tempting a "tender boy" contains in it something more than a side-glance at Shakespeare's own forced marriage with an older woman; but, of course, this idea, too, has been scouted as my foul invention.

It will be sufficient for my present purpose just to note in passing that neither the lustful queen of love nor the chaste matron Lucrece lives for us in Shakespeare's verse with any individual life. The poems are companion pictures of passion and not portraits of women.

In order to trace Shakespeare's growth from the beginning, I am compelled to consider his earliest works, *Titus Andronicus* and the *First Part of King Henry VI.*, and again I find myself at variance with the professors. I have given some reasons elsewhere for thinking that much of *Titus Andronicus* was written by Shakespeare; the professors do not agree with me, and the point is hardly worth further debate in this place; for no one will deny that Tamora is a mere fiend, and has no nearer relation to womanhood than her name. I have also stated that much of the *First Part of Henry VI.* is certainly Shakespeare's; in fact, that "he wrote more than we, who have his mature work in mind are inclined to ascribe to him," and this I must now endeavour to prove, for this play marks a moment in Shakespeare's growth and is, therefore, necessary to my argument, and all the professor-mandarins are here leagued in battle against me. I must, therefore, clear the way a little before I go any further.



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Were there no other reasons for attributing the *First Part of Henry VI.* to Shakespeare, I should be inclined to follow the first editors, Hemyng and Condell, who included it with *Titus Andronicus* in their First Folio of 1623, for I am fain to believe that those two men who played on the same stage with Shakespeare for many years must have known his work intimately. They were honest, too; scrupulous even, as Englishmen are apt to be, and erred on the right side perhaps by refusing to include in the First Folio anything that was not undoubtedly his. They left out some plays which he had certainly touched up and bettered, such as *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, but they published nothing that did not in the main belong to him. In case of doubt, therefore, it will be well to follow their authority.

A little consideration of the *First Part of Henry VI.* will show precisely the professors' procedure and what it is worth. "The view that *I. Henry VI.* was wholly the work of Shakespeare," says Professor Herford, "is now probably extinct in England," though "it is still orthodox in Germany." He goes on: "The First Part clearly stands apart from the other two . . . it contains a far larger mass of utterly un-Shakespearean work." The professor's drastic-bold statement derives from the fact that Coleridge asserted that part of the first scene of the first act of this "First Part" was not written by Shakespeare, and consequently the professors bettering the hint are all contemptuous in their rejection of the greater part of the play. "Now we can kick the Germans," they say, and proceed to kick. But all good readers have been compelled to accept as Shakespeare's at least two scenes, the dispute in the Temple Gardens about the roses and the wooing of Margaret by Suffolk. Mr. Swinburne insisted that the last battle and death of Talbot was just as undoubtedly Shakespeare's. He went on, however, to cast some doubt on the courtship of Margaret by Suffolk: "This latter, indeed, full as it is of natural and vivid grace, may not perhaps be beyond the reach of one or two among the rivals of his (Shakespeare's) earliest years of work."

Now the professors have nothing to do but register these authoritative opinions. Not one of them has ever cast a ray of light on any such disputed point. They are there to notice



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the growing disuse of rhyme as Shakespeare approached manhood and the gradual use of weak endings in his later life, and by such mechanical tests to determine approximately the date of the plays. But what are they to do, it may be asked, when their authorities differ? They should record the difference and leave it at that; but they will obtrude their own limitations; they make a choice and thus often darken counsel. For example, Professor Herford in this dilemma seeing that the wooing of Margaret is "so oddly diapered in the last act with the end of Joan; . . ." decides that "it has very little title to be considered Shakespeare's work." After much experience of such *ex cathedra* assertions one is inclined to say, "Well roared, Bottom," and pay no further heed; for professor echoes professor as Shallow sings to Shallow; but it is imperative to notice an opinion of Swinburne. One word of Swinburne or Coleridge on such a point is worth all the pronouncements of all the professors since the flood; for the poets have imaginative sympathy to guide them and the professors are without such light. But in this instance Swinburne is mistaken, and the motive which misled him is at hand. If he accepted the wooing of Margaret by Suffolk which precedes and follows the scene wherein Joan of Arc is libelled as never woman was libelled before or since by a poet, he would be almost compelled to ascribe the libel to Shakespeare, and this was too much for Swinburne's patriotism. "That damnable last scene," he says, "at which the gorge rises even to remember it, is in execution as unlike the crudest phase of Shakespeare's style as in conception it is unlike the idlest birth of his spirit." This is very strongly put, but loud words carry little conviction. Let us bring the matter to proof, and first let us consider the wooing. When Suffolk sees Margaret he cries:

> Oh, fairest beauty, do not fear nor fly!
> For I will touch thee but with reverent hands;
> I kiss these fingers for eternal peace,
> And lay them gently on thy tender side.
> Who art thou? say, that I may honour thee.

Surely this is Shakespeare; young Shakespeare at his best: a moment later Suffolk exclaims:

> Be not offended, nature's miracle,

and all doubt vanishes; this is Shakespeare's very voice; no one



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before him or since wrote like that, and the whole scene is stamped with the same seal.

And later (scene v.) when Suffolk goes on to praise Margaret to the king, one cannot but hear Shakespeare's accent, his favourite words, his bookish illustrations, everything:

SUF. Tush, my good lord, this superficial tale
Is but a preface of her worthy praise;
The chief perfections of that lovely dame,
Had I sufficient skill to utter them,
*Would make a volume of enticing lines,*
*Able to ravish any dull conceit:*
And, which is more, she is not so divine,
So full-replete with choice of all delights,
But with as humble lowliness of mind
She is content to be at your command;
Command, I mean, of virtuous chaste intents,
To love and honour Henry as her lord.

I have put the two most intimate and permanently characteristic lines in italics for the benefit of the professors and those who don't know anything about Shakespeare; but the whole scene is just as indubitably his in spite of Swinburne.

And Shakespeare's work in this *First Part* is not confined to the scenes already mentioned. In my book, *The Man Shakespeare*, I state: "It would be easy to prove that much of what the dying Mortimer says is just as certainly Shakespeare's work as any of the passages referred to by Mr. Swinburne." Now for the proof.

Act ii. scene 5. *Enter* MORTIMER, *brought in a chair, and* Gaolers.
MOR. Kind keepers of my weak decaying age,
Let dying Mortimer here rest himself.
Even like a man new haled from the rack,
So fare my limbs with long imprisonment;
And these grey locks, the pursuivants of death,
Nestor-like aged in an age of care,
Argue the end of Edmund Mortimer.
These eyes, like lamps whose wasting oil is spent,
Wax dim, as drawing to their exigent. . . .

One hears Shakespeare in every word; but if any one can believe that the last two lines were written by any other hand, he is past my curing,* and in Mortimer's very next speech, I hear the

* I may be called upon to prove the obvious, and therefore beg any would-be critic to notice that nearly twenty years later Shakespeare makes the dying Antony speak of the "exigent" (*Antony and Cleopatra*, Act iv. scene 12), and Cleopatra in the very next scene describing Antony's death says, "Our lamp is spent, it's out."



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master again just as certainly. Mortimer talks of death as "the arbitrator of despairs," and goes on:

> Just death, kind umpire of men's miseries,
> With sweet enlargement doth dismiss me hence . . .

The very words remind me of Posthumus. A little later Mortimer tells his nephew:

> . . . Thy uncle is removing hence
> As princes do their courts, when they are cloy'd
> With long continuance in a settled place.

The whole scene is not only Shakespeare's, but Shakespeare at his most characteristic; a dying man is as sure to catch his sympathy as a lover, and he delights in using both as a mouthpiece of his own feelings.

The more carefully I read this "First Part," the more often I find Shakespeare in it. Swinburne was more than justified in ascribing "the last battle and death of Talbot" to Shakespeare. The whole of the character of Talbot displays his handiwork.

In the third scene of the second act, Talbot tells the Countess she has entrapped him in vain:

> No, no, I am but shadow of myself:
> You are deceived, my substance is not here;
> For what you see is but the smallest part
> And least proportion of humanity. . . .

Here surely is the cunning of Shakespeare's thought, clad in most characteristic phrase.

Talbot's courteous forgivingness, too, is just as certainly the gentle, generous Shakespeare's:

> What you have done hath not offended me;
> Nor other satisfaction do I crave,
> But only, with your patience, that we may
> Taste of your wine and see what cates you have;
> For soldiers' stomachs always serve them well."

To sum up briefly, there is some of the first act in which I don't hear Shakespeare; but almost from the moment when Talbot comes on the stage in the second act to the very end of the play, I find proof upon proof of Shakespeare's work on almost every page. In fact, his hand is as plainly to be seen in this First Part, as it is in the Second or Third parts. Talbot and Mortimer, Margaret and Suffolk are as truly his painting as the great picture of the gentle saint Henry VI.



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In depicting Margaret, Shakespeare seems to have followed history closely in a dozen different scenes. There was no doubt a clear tradition of her pride, courage, and high spirit, and these are the qualities he gives her from beginning to end, so that she becomes in his pages somewhat hard and wordy, though the opportunity offered itself to him to do better. When her young son Edward is murdered, she could have been pictured as breaking down, could have been made human for us by some touch of despairing sorrow, but no! she rails on with dreadful verbosity through scene after scene and play after play, till we are relieved when she disappears from the stage for ever.

But if Shakespeare copied history slavishly when painting Margaret, what about Joan of Arc? Does he treat her in the same way? Must we accept the atrocious libel on her as his? I am afraid we must, for not only is it embedded in what is indubitably his work, but the worst part of it is just such an invention as would suggest itself to him. The poets are all against me here, so I must give my reasons, must consider carefully the whole of this portrait of Joan of Arc if, indeed, portrait it may be called.

The painting of great characters has this advantage, or disadvantage as the case may be, that every shortcoming of the painter will be revealed in the portrait; if the mirror cannot contain, or if it distorts the object, its limitations and faults must strike every one. What Shakespeare says of himself,

> They who level at my abuses reckon up their own,

might well be applied to all great personages, and to none more fitly than to this heroic woman-soul.

Shakespeare might have painted the traditional Joan of Arc of Holinshed as he painted the traditional Margaret, and no one would have been able to deduce much more than youth from his subservience. He began by doing this, then out of patriotism he went on to idealise Talbot, and consequently is almost compelled to diminish Joan's triumphs; he makes her take Rouen (which was never taken, but opened its gates seventeen years after her death) by a trick because he wants to give Talbot the glory of retaking it by sheer English courage. He puts down all her



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successes to witchery and sorcery, as Holinshed did, and when she is captured, he not only repeats the usual libel on her that she pretended to be with child by this and that noble in order to prolong her life, but he blackens this libel by a suggestion made in the first act. When the Dauphin presses her to marry him, Shakespeare makes her half promise to yield to him and talk of her "recompense," and this half-promise and the desire of reward deepen the bad impression made by her pretended confessions in the last act. But Shakespeare is not content to prove that the noble French girl is light and loose and common, he absolutely invents a scene in which she denies her shepherd-father, and asserts that she is "nobly born" for no reason, or rather in defiance of reason; for he has already followed tradition by making Joan in the first act avow her parentage. Here is the astounding slander and contradiction. In the first act, speaking as the traditional *pucelle*, Joan says:

> Dauphin, I am by birth a shepherd's daughter,
> My wit untrain'd by any kind of art,
> Heaven and our Lady gracious hath it pleased
> To shine on my contemptible estate.
> Lo, whilst I waited on my tender lambs
> And to sun's parching heat display'd my cheeks,
> God's mother deigned to appear to me
> And in a vision full of majesty
> Will'd me to leave my base vocation
> And free my country from calamity.

This is all natural enough, if not very wonderful, though even here I think I distinguish Shakespeare's voice particularly in the second, third, and fourth lines. In the last act, when her father claims her, this is how Joan talks to him:

> Decrepit miser! base ignoble wretch!
> I am descended of a gentler blood;
> Thou art no father nor no friend of mine.

And she is made to repeat this denial and this foolish boast again and again.

This invention does not surprise me in Shakespeare: it is all in character: Shakespeare, forgetting the previous confession and making Joan brag that she is of "nobler birth" and "issued from the progeny of kings," it is, alas! all in keeping and just



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such a boast as would first suggest itself to Shakespeare's snobbishness. But Swinburne insists that not only is the execution cruder than Shakespeare's style, but "the conception is unlike the idlest birth of his spirit."

Now I would not attribute the scene to Shakespeare, even in youth, if I could help it, or if it stood alone; but it does not. A dozen years later he made somewhat the same fault though an infinitely smaller one when telling the story of Othello. The Moor wears "the shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun," is very dark or black in complexion, and so inferior to the fair Venetian aristocrat, Desdemona, as Shakespeare felt himself inferior to the maid of honour whom he loved. But instead of leaving us with the pathos of this inferiority, as soon as he begins to write about Othello, he makes him brag of his "royal" descent. Shakespeare's snobbery played havoc with his art again and again though Swinburne as an Englishman has not noticed the blundering.

For years I tried to believe with the poets that this foul libel on one of the noblest of women was not written by Shakespeare; but from the beginning it was clear to me that he must have seen it and approved of it, and gradually it became manifest that he wrote in some of the worst lines of it himself. At length I had to yield to the evidence. It is his, I am afraid, from beginning to end. If any one wishes to know where Shakespeare started from, here is his lowest point. This is where he stood in 1590 or thereabouts when he was twenty-six years of age. This is what English patriotism and English snobbishness had done for him—his nadir, so to speak. How he swung out of it; in how vast an orbit, and what heights he reached—that is his story, and the world's wonder!

The most obvious remark about these early plays is that Shakespeare has already begun to identify himself with the gentle, saintly, and unfortunate characters, and so realises them for us. The figure of the dying Mortimer is irradiated by the splendour of his poetry; the saintly Henry VI. lives for us like a portrait of Fra Angelico, and when he paints a Talbot, it is to lend him his own magnanimous generosity. But his women at this time were at the best historical or traditional lay figures,



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such as Margaret and Venus and Lucrece, and at the worst mere masks or libels on humanity like Joan of Arc, and Tamora in *Titus Andronicus*—not a living creature among them all.

Suddenly in the crowd of lifeless marionettes we catch the hot eyes of an angry woman; she is painted French-wise, mainly by shadows or faults, and these are repeated again and again with vehement and extravagant exaggeration, the personal feeling of the painter showing itself in every stroke. Of course I am speaking of *The Comedy of Errors* and the portrait of the jealous wife, Adriana. At the moment, I am not concerned to determine whether *The Comedy of Errors* is earlier or later than the *First Part of King Henry VI.* or *Love's Labour's Lost.* It was not revised later and changed as was *Love's Labour's Lost.* It was probably written soon after 1589, and is certainly one of Shakespeare's earliest works.

The sketch of Adriana is crude but vivid; the woman lives for us indeed, much as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* lives mainly through ill-temper. Who is it? one naturally asks: who is the jealous railing woman who made such an impression on young Shakespeare that he cannot but paint her and make her live for us by reason of his very hatred? I say it was his wife, whom he had been forced to marry and the critics all laugh; nothing so preposterous has ever been suggested to them! What next, indeed?

Before I go on to prove that the jealous scold Adriana was a picture of Shakespeare's wife, and was deliberately intended by him for a portrait of her, let me just say that even this is not the first time that he has mentioned his forced marriage and its unhappy consequences. I have already shown that he identifies himself with the lover Suffolk in the *First Part of King Henry VI.*, and particularly in the courtship of Margaret.

When the lords oppose the choice of Margaret, Suffolk says:

> A dower, my lords! disgrace not so your king,
> That he should be so abject, base and poor,
> To choose for wealth and not for perfect love.
> Henry is able to enrich his queen
> And not to seek a queen to make him rich:
> So worthless peasants bargain for their wives,
> As market-men for oxen, sheep, or horse.



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*Marriage is a matter of more worth*
*Than to be dealt in by attorneyship;*
Not whom we will, but whom his grace affects,
Must be companion of his nuptial bed:
And therefore, lords, since he affects her most
It most of all these reasons bindeth us,
In our opinions she should be preferr'd.
*For what is wedlock forced but a hell,*
*An age of discord and continual strife?*
Whereas the contrary bringeth bliss,
And is a pattern of celestial peace.

Now consider the first two lines which I have put in italics. They must strike any reader as astonishing, for they are not in keeping with the circumstances; they absolutely destroy Suffolk's own argument; for, strange to say, Suffolk himself has dealt in this very matter as an "attorney," and stranger still a little earlier, in scene 3 of the same act, he applies the very word "attorney" to himself:

And yet, methinks, I could be well content
To be my own attorney in this case.

How is this confusion to be explained? In youth even a Shakespeare has not much observation of life with which to stuff out his characters; he is almost compelled to draw on his own experiences, to say nothing of the fact that his experiences and their vivid emotions press for utterance. But even in his earliest works Shakespeare is not apt to make a lover, whom he uses as a mouthpiece, argue against himself save for overpowering personal reasons; his own marriage, we know, had been forced on him by the attorneyship of Anne Hathaway's father's two friends, Fulk Sandells and John Richardson, and he could not forgive the interference.

The next passage marked in italics proves that this "assumption" of mine is correct: Suffolk talks of "wedlock forced" as "but a hell" though no one but himself is trying to force any bride upon Henry. The truth is Shakespeare has identified himself with the lover Suffolk at once, and he drags in his own painful experience though here it is worse than out of place: for it makes Suffolk condemn Suffolk's action. Manifestly Shakespeare is here thinking of his own "forced wedlock"



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which he found to be "a hell—an age of discord and continual strife."

Now let us consider whether these inferences are confirmed by the portrait of Adriana in *The Comedy of Errors*. The first thing I notice is that the jealous scolding wife is out of place in the gay comedy of mistaken identity; it would be in better keeping with the spirit of the play if Adriana were a very loving and affectionate creature, for then there would be some amusement in her mistaking the wrong Antipholus for her husband, and lavishing caresses on the wrong man. Still, the critics are obdurate; they can deduce nothing from the dramatist's bad work. But to the fair-minded reader my inference (which alone explains the circumstances) must create at least a suspicion; and now for further evidence. Almost the only thing we know certainly about Shakespeare's wife is that she was eight years older than he was. Now this trait has nothing to do with Adriana; moreover, it is the very last thing a jealous scolding woman would tell about herself; and yet Shakespeare makes Adriana tell it. In spite of this the English critics pooh-pooh what they persist in calling my "assumption." If we knew that Shakespeare's wife squinted and Adriana admitted that she had a cast in her eye and deplored the fact, these gentry would still say that the simple identification was a mere coincidence. But after all such critics hardly count.

At the risk of explaining the obvious, I shall accumulate proof on proof, warning my antagonists at the same time that there are many more weapons still unused in the armoury. For there is some slight danger that in this field even I, a hundred years hence, may be regarded as an authority, and so in turn become, dread thought! food for the professors!

I shall transcribe a couple of scenes where Adriana figures and ask my readers to notice first of all the difference between Shakespeare's painting of Adriana and her sister. Adriana is introduced to us as fretting because her husband does not return home, and her sister advises patience.

> ADR. Neither my husband nor the slave return'd,
> That in such haste I sent to seek his master!
> Sure, Luciana, it is two o'clock.



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Luc. Perhaps some merchant hath invited him
And from the mart he's somewhere gone to dinner.
Good sister, let us dine and never fret:
A man is master of his liberty:
Time is their master, and when they see time
They'll go or come; if so, be patient, sister.
Adr. Why should their liberty than ours be more?
Luc. Because their business still lies out o' door.
Adr. Look, when I serve him so, he takes it ill.
Luc. O, know he is the bridle of your will.
Adr. There's none but asses will be bridled so.
Luc. Why, headstrong liberty is lash'd with woe.
There's nothing situate under heaven's eye
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky:
The beasts, the fishes and the winged fowls,
Are their males' subjects and at their controls:
Men, more divine, the masters of all these,
Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas,
Indu'd with intellectual sense and souls,
Of more pre-eminence than fish and fowls,
Are masters to their females, and their lords:
Then let your will attend on their accords.
Adr. This servitude makes you to keep unwed.
Luc. Not this, but troubles of the marriage-bed.
Adr. But, were you wedded, you would bear some sway.
Luc. Ere I learn love, I'll practise to obey.
Adr. How if your husband start some other where?
Luc. Till he come home again, I would forbear.

And so on and on.

This extraordinary scene should, I think, carry its own lesson. First of all an unmarried sister is hardly likely to be so patient as a married woman; again, an unmarried sister is not likely to take the husband's part; and finally, no unmarried sister ever yet spoke in favour of a man as Luciana speaks in this long tirade against liberty which she should have addressed to the straying husband and not to the faithful wife. Manifestly, Shakespeare is making the sister Luciana, in defiance of probability, admonish and reprove his wife as he would wish her to have been admonished and reproved. Adriana is as natural in jealousy and impatience as Luciana is unnatural. And she displays the same temper and impatience again and again in the following scene with Dromio of Ephesus. Indeed here she carries her ill-temper to such a pitch that she would beat the servant and again her manly sister reproves her.

Then at once comes the incredible scene wherein Adriana



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admits her own age, and worse still admits its deforming effect:

> Luc. Fie, how impatience loureth in your face!
> Adr. His company must do his minions grace
> Whilst I at home starve for a merry look.
> *Hath homely age the alluring beauty took*
> *From my poor cheek?* then he hath wasted it:
> Are my discourses dull? barren my wit?
> If voluble and sharp discourse be marr'd
> Unkindness blunts it more than marble hard:
> Do their gay vestments his affections bait?
> That's not my fault: he's master of my state:
> What ruins are in me that can be found,
> By him not ruin'd? then is he the ground
> Of my defeatures. My decayed fair
> A sunny look of his would soon repair:
> But too unruly deer, he breaks the pale
> And feeds from home; poor I am but his stale.

Now at the risk of maddening my critics, I must point out that every word of this weird speech throws light on Shakespeare's married life. To take the main point first: no jealous woman would mention her age, and if she did mention it in anger, it would be to declare that it had not affected her beauty. But this Adriana admits her age; admits too, that it has robbed her of her "alluring beauty"; she harps on the fact, indeed, that she is a "decayed fair." Shakespeare was cruel to poor Anne Hathaway. Now take the first line of the speech; "his minions"; she is not jealous of one in especial as women are apt to be, but of many. We shall soon see that this is Shakespeare confessing his love of gay company and an audience.

Take the second line: she starves at home for "a merry look"—surely a woman would say for "a loving look"; it is again Shakespeare confessing. Let no one think this is supersubtle; it is obvious: Shakespeare repeats the touch a few lines further on—"a sunny look." Then, too, what woman would think of excusing her "dull discourses"? her "barren wit"? These are Shakespeare's charges against his wife. Again; would any woman admit in this way that the others of whom she is jealous have "gay vestments" while she has none; she would rather make this to her sister the chief reason why her husband leaves her and not the loss of her good looks. Every



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word of it all is, unconsciously, a confession of young Shakespeare himself. The incredible sister continues :

Luc. Self-harming jealousy !—fie, beat it hence !
Adr. Unfeeling fools can with such wrongs dispense.
I know his eye doth homage other where :
Or else what lets it but he would be here ?
Sister, you know he promised me a chain ;
Would that alone, alone he would detain,
*So he would keep fair quarters with his bed*. . . .
Since that my beauty cannot please his eye,
I'll weep what's left away, and weeping die.
Luc. How many fond fools serve mad jealousy !

Shakespeare's accusation of his wife is so naïvely out of character that it serves to convict him and paint their relations even to the sensual touch in the line I have italicised.

One other thing which Adriana says, later, must be relieved out because it throws light on Shakespeare himself :

Adr. Husband, I'll dine above with you to-day,
And shrive you of a thousand idle pranks. . . .

Surely these snapshots of the jealous, scolding Adriana and of merry sunny vagrant Shakespeare full of " a thousand idle pranks " in gay company may be accepted in their entirety.

I must now leave to my readers a dozen more pages where Adriana's characteristics are repeated and over-emphasised and content myself with transcribing the astounding scene at the end of the play, where Shakespeare betrays himself finally and fully, the scene in which the Abbess leads Adriana on to confess her jealous scolding and then shames her. The scene is utterly out of place ; it does not advance, but retards the action, it is a blot and mistake only to be accounted for by Shakespeare's personal bitterness :

Abb. How long hath this possession held the man ?
Adr. This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,
And much different from the man he was :
But till this afternoon his passion
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.
Abb. Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck of sea ?
Buried some dear friend ? Hath not else his eye
Stray'd his affection in unlawful love ?
A sin prevailing much in youthful men,
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing.
Which of these sorrows is he subject to ?



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ADR. To none of these, except it be the last;
Namely, some love that drew him oft from home.
ABB. You should for that have reprehended him.
ADR. Why, so I did.
ABB. Ah, but not rough enough.
ADR. As roughly as my modesty would let me.
ABB. Haply, in private.
ADR. And in assemblies too.
ABB. Ay, but not enough.
ADR. It was the copy of our conference;
In bed he slept not for my urging it;
Alone, it was the subject of my theme;
In company I often glanced it;
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.
ABB. And therefore came it that the man was mad;
The venom clamours of a jealous woman
Poisons more deadly than a mad dog's tooth. . . .

If any one in face of this carefully manufactured, seemingly impartial, but in reality virulent condemnation can still maintain that Adriana was not meant for Shakespeare's wife, he should at least account in some other way for the hundred astonishing facts in this story which my "assumption" assuredly does explain with perfect ease and simplicity.

Shakespeare has not even left us in doubt as to his attitude as a husband towards his wife. From the very beginning he has identified himself, as I have elsewhere proved, with Antipholus of Syracuse, and this is the way Antipholus-Shakespeare speaks of Adriana:

She that doth call me husband, even my soul
Doth for a wife abhor. . . .

Now there is no reason for this abhorrence in the play; on the contrary, Antipholus has been well treated by Adriana: she has taken him to dinner, and been kind to him. How are we to explain this uncalled-for and over-emphatic condemnation? How can we account for it save by the fact that poor Shakespeare is thinking of his own forced marriage and his jealous, scolding, termagant wife.

We shall soon see that the circumstances of Shakespeare's forced marriage and his relations with his wife, as narrated in my book, *The Man Shakespeare*, come to view again and again in these youthful works; we meet references to it, sidelong glances at it, in the most unlikely places.



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*Love's Labour's Lost* should now be considered, but it was so completely revised in 1597 that from my present point of view I must not consider it here except to say that neither the Princess nor any of her ladies, with the exception of Rosaline, has any existence whatever. They are one and all mere lay figures introduced to show off Shakespeare's wit. Rosaline, indeed, is alive from head to foot, but her character, being wholly due to the later revision, must be considered later.

I can dismiss *Richard II.* even more curtly, there is no woman's portrait in it worth mentioning; and I could pass over *Richard III.* which is a continuation of the *Third Part of Henry VI.*, just as quickly, if it were not for the fact that the great scene in the first act, the wooing of Anne by Gloucester, is declared by Coleridge not to have been written by Shakespeare. Coleridge does not tell us who else could have conceived this astonishing scene. He contents himself with a bare denial, and of course the professors follow him into the ditch. Poor, weak Coleridge could not sympathise with the masterly life in the episode; the cynical audacity of the hunchback revolted him, and so he refused to ascribe the scene to his idol.

The marriage of Richard with Prince Edward's widow is recorded by Holinshed without remark. Shakespeare takes the incredible fact, transmutes it with inimitable genius; makes, indeed, one of his greatest scenes out of it, an unforgettable picture. The scene does not advance the action; but Richard lives in it with such intensity of life; his wooing is so masterly, his cynical effrontery so astounding that we can never afterwards see him but in this fierce, raw limelight. The whole scene undoubtedly belongs to Shakespeare; no one else could have done such work.

At the very beginning, Richard shows the sinuous fierceness of a wild cat. He first orders, then threatens, then turns to Anne with obsequious flattery:

> Sweet saint, for charity, be not so curst,

and on the very next page his prayer:

> Vouchsafe, divine perfection of a woman . . .



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removes all doubt: it is all Shakespeare, and most characteristic. Richard goes on to talk of "beauty's wreck . . . thy heavenly face that set me on . . ." and pictures Edward as "framed in the prodigality of nature"—every touch pure Shakespeare. He even breaks in with the "Tush" we have already found in the characteristic Shakespearean speeches of Suffolk in the *First Part of Henry VI.* and which we shall find again in Romeo. Every word in the scene was written by Shakespeare; but marvellously as Richard is painted in it, Anne scarcely comes to light at all. She curses at first and rails with something of the malignant verbosity of Margaret; but there is hardly more than a suggestion of individual life. When Richard tells her that he will kill himself, there is just a hint of character-drawing. Anne says:

> I would I knew thy heart,

—just one good stroke, and no more. She turns to joy and affection too suddenly to be human; she's a weather-hen in woman's shape and that's all.

This crude painting of Anne, and Shakespeare's manifest contempt of her, give us the true explanation of the scene. Shakespeare's vanity had been wounded in his unhappy marriage; he had been bruised and beaten in the sordid strife with his wife and forced to fly; but he still held that the man was the master: he harped on the thought to strengthen his belief:

> She is a woman, therefore may be woo'd;
> She is a woman, therefore may be won.
>
> *Titus Andronicus.*

and:

> She's beautiful, and therefore to be woo'd;
> She is a woman, therefore to be won.
>
> *I. Henry VI.*

and again:

> That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man,
> If with his tongue he cannot win a woman.
>
> *The Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

and finally Richard himself cries:

> Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
> Was ever woman in this humour won?

Evidently Shakespeare means to show us by Richard's



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triumph how easy it is with flattering words to overcome and subdue a woman, even a woman maddened with grief and resentment. This is the balm which Shakespeare lays to his hurt pride.

Before I try and corroborate this argument from another play let me just remark that the other female figures in *Richard III.* are no better drawn than that of Anne. The Duchess of York and Queen Elizabeth rave and lament as Margaret raves: there is no individual life in any of them.

The women characters in *The Taming of the Shrew* hardly deserve consideration. Neither Katharina nor Bianca is worthy to be called a woman's portrait; we only know a trait or two of them, and the widow is not even an outline. But the play itself has another and deeper interest for us as throwing light on Shakespeare's life and character. In spite of the enormous success it has had on the stage and the fact that it has really held its place in popular liking even to our time, it is a wretchedly poor farce, and the theme is utterly unworthy of the master. Much of the play does not read like him; but his hand is quite plainly revealed in the scenes between Katharina and Petruchio; in fact, *The Taming of the Shrew* is his. One cannot but wonder why Shakespeare ever put hand to such a paltry subject. The answer comes pat to those who believe that he himself had been married unhappily to a jealous, ill-tempered scold. Marriage had been a defeat to him: he could not but see that; in this play he will comfort his pride by showing how even a shrew can be mastered; how violence can be subdued by violence. The moment one looks at the play from this point of view, its *raison d'être* becomes clear to one and its faults are all explained. When Katharina obeys her husband, Hortensio asks:

> . . . I wonder what it bodes?

and Petruchio replies:

> Marry, peace it bodes, and love and quiet life,
> And awful rule and right supremacy;
> And, to be short, what not, that's sweet and happy?

In no other way but as a salve to wounded vanity can one explain Katharina's appalling-foolish lecture to the other wives with which the play reaches its climax.



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Fie, fie! unknit that threatening unkind brow,
And dart not scornful glances from those eyes,
To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor. . . .

* * * *

A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty;
And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty
Will deign to sip or touch one drop of it. . . .

Even with the explanation in mind one is inclined to marvel how Shakespeare could seriously pen such drivel; but he goes on raving for another thirty lines:

Such duty as the subject owes the prince
Even such a woman oweth to her husband;
And when she is froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
And not obedient to his honest will,
What is she but a foul contending rebel
And graceless traitor to her loving lord? . . . .

* * * *

Come, come, you froward and unable worms! . . .

* * * *

Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,
And place your hands below your husband's foot. . . .

Any one who knows Shakespeare will find an accent of personal feeling in every line of this silly tirade. The proof that my explanation is the right one may be carried to minute detail. As soon as Shakespeare finished writing this astonishing speech of Katharine he threw down the pen; the last eight lines or so of this play are written by another hand; the interest had gone out of the thing for him when Katharina was sufficiently humbled and he tossed the play aside. It is to be hoped that he got rid in it of some of the bitterness and anger which his wife's ill-temper, jealousy, and shrewish nature had bred in him.

About this time he seems to have come to the opinion that women are very easy to master or to win by any man who takes the matter in hand and has a clever tongue. He was soon to find that it is easier to triumph on the stage than in life. His self-conceit and his low opinion of women were soon to bring their own Nemesis. But first he was to savour his conquests and pamper his vanity in another way.

*(To be continued)*



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# A Round of Visits

By Henry James

## PART SECOND

### V

WITHIN the apartment to which he had been admitted, moreover, the fine intelligence we have imputed to Monteith was in the course of three minutes confirmed; since it took him no longer than that to say to himself, facing his old acquaintance, that he had never seen any one so improved. The place, which had the semblance of a high studio light as well as a general air of other profusions and amplitudes, might have put him off a little by its several rather glaringly false accents, those of contemporary domestic "art" striking a little wild. The scene was smaller, but the rich confused complexion of the Pocahontas, showing through Du Barry paint and patches, might have set the example—which had been followed with the costliest candour—so that, clearly, Winch was in these days rich, as most people in New York seemed rich; as, in spite of Bob's depredations, Florence Ash was, as even Mrs. Folliott was in spite of Phil Bloodgood's, as even Phil Bloodgood himself must have been for reasons too obvious; as in fine every one had a secret for being, or for feeling, or for looking, every one at least but Mark Monteith.

These facts were as nothing, however, in presence of his quick and strong impression that his pale, nervous, smiling, clean-shaven host had undergone since their last meeting some extraordinary process of refinement. He had been ill, unmistakably, and the effects of a plunge into plain clean living, where any fineness had remained, were often startling, sometimes almost charming. But independently of this, and for a much longer



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time, some principle of intelligence, some art of life, would discernibly have worked in him. Remembered from college years and from those two or three luckless and faithless ones of the Law School as constitutionally common, as consistently and thereby doubtless even rather powerfully coarse, clever only for uncouth and questionable things, he yet presented himself now as if he had suddenly and mysteriously been educated. There was a charm in his wide, "drawn," convalescent smile, in the way his fine fingers—had he anything like fine fingers of old?—played, and just fidgeted, over the prompt and perhaps a trifle incoherent offer of cigars, cordials, ash-trays, over the question of his visitor's hat, stick, fur-coat, general best accommodation and ease; and how the deuce, accordingly, had charm, for coming out so on top, Mark wondered, "squared" the other old elements? For the short interval so to have dealt with him what force had it turned on, what patented process, of the portentous New York order in which there were so many, had it skilfully applied? Were these the things New York did when you just gave her *all* her head, and that he himself then had perhaps too complacently missed? Strange almost to the point of putting him positively off at first—quite as an exhibition of the uncanny—this sense of Newton's having all the while neither missed nor muffed anything, and having, as with an eye to the *coup de théâtre* to come, lowered one's expectations, at the start, to that abject pitch. It might have affected one verily as an act of bad faith—really as such a rare stroke of subtlety as could scarce have been achieved by a straight or natural aim.

So much as this at least came and went in Monteith's agitated mind; the oddest intensity of apprehension, admiration, mystification, which the high north-light of the March afternoon and the quite splendidly vulgar appeal of fifty overdone decorative effects somehow fostered and sharpened. Everything had already gone, however, the next moment, for wasn't the man he had come so quite over-intelligently himself to patronise absolutely bowling him over with the extraordinary speech: "See here, you know—you must be ill, or have had a bad shock, or some beastly upset: are you very sure you ought to have come out?" Yes, he after an instant believed his ears; coarse



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common Newton Winch, whom he had called on because he could, as a gentleman, after all afford to, coarse common Newton Winch, who had had troubles and been epidemically poisoned, lamentably sick, who bore in his face and in the very tension, quite exactly the "charm," of his manner, the traces of his late ordeal, and, for that matter, of scarce completed gallant emergence—this astonishing ex-comrade was simply writing himself at a stroke (into our friend's excited imagination at all events) the most distinguished of men. Oh, *he* was going to be interesting, if Florence Ash had been going to be; but Mark felt how, under the law of a lively present difference, that would be as an effect of one's having one's self thoroughly rallied. He knew within the minute that the tears stood in his eyes; he stared through them at his friend with a sharp "Why, how do you know? How *can* you?" To which he added before Winch could speak: "I met your charming sister-in-law a couple of hours since—at luncheon, at the Pocahontas; and heard from her that you were badly laid up and had spoken of me. So I came to minister to you."

The object of this design hovered there again, considerably restless, shifting from foot to foot, changing his place, beginning and giving up motions, striking matches for a fresh cigarette, offering them again, redundantly, to his guest and then not lighting himself—but all the while with the smile of another creature than the creature known to Mark; all the while with the history of something that had happened to him ever so handsomely shining out. Mark was conscious within himself from this time on of two quite distinct processes of notation—that of his practically instant surrender to the consequences of the act of perception in his host of which the two women trained supposably in the art of pleasing had been altogether incapable; and that of some other condition on Newton's part that left his own poor power of divination nothing less than shamed. This last was signally the case on the former's saying, ever so responsively, almost radiantly, in answer to his account of how he happened to come: "Oh then it's very interesting!" *That* was the astonishing note, after what he had been through: neither Mrs. Folliott nor Florence Ash had so much as hinted or



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breathed to him that *he* might have incurred that praise. No wonder therefore he was now taken—with this fresh party's instant suspicion and imputation of it; though it was indeed for some minutes next as if each tried to see which could accuse the other of the greater miracle of penetration. Mark was so struck, in a word, with the extraordinarily straight guess Winch had had there in reserve for him that, other quick impressions helping, there was nothing for him but to bring out, himself: "There must be, my dear man, something rather wonderful the matter with you!" The quite more intensely and more irresistibly drawn grin, the quite unmistakably deeper consciousness in the dark, wide eye, that accompanied the not quite immediate answer to which remark he was afterwards to remember.

"How do you know that—or why do you think it?"

"Because there *must* be—for you to see! I shouldn't have expected it."

"Then you take me for a damned fool?" laughed wonderful Newton Winch.

## VI

He could say nothing that, whether as to the sense of it or as to the way of it, didn't so enrich Mark's vision of him that our friend, after a little, as this effect proceeded, caught himself in the act of almost too curiously gaping. Everything, from moment to moment, fed his curiosity; such a question, for instance, as whether the quite ordinary peepers of the Newton Winch of their earlier youth could have looked, under any provocation, either dark or wide; such a question, above all, as how *this* incalculable apparition came by the whole startling power of play of its extravagantly sensitive labial connections—exposed, so to its advantage (he now jumped at one explanation) by the removal of what had probably been one of the vulgarest of moustaches. With this, at the same time, the oddity of that particular consequence was vivid to him; the glare of his curiosity fairly lasting while he remembered how he had once noted the very opposite turn of the experiment for Phil Bloodgood. He would have said in advance that poor Winch couldn't have



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afforded to risk showing his "real" mouth; just as he would have said that in spite of the fine ornament that so considerably muffled it Phil could only have gained by showing his. But to have seen Phil shorn—as he once had done—was earnestly to pray that he might promptly again bristle; beneath Phil's moustache lurked nothing to "make up" for it in case of removal. While he thought of which things the line of grimace, as he could only have called it, the mobile, interesting, ironic line the great double curve of which connected, in the face before him, the strong nostril with the lower cheek, became the very key to his first idea of Newton's capture of refinement. He had shaved and was happily transfigured. Phil Bloodgood had shaved and been wellnigh lost; though why should he just now too precipitately drag the reminiscence in?

That question too, at the queer touch of association, played up for Mark even under so much proof that the state of his own soul was being with the lapse of every instant registered. Phil Bloodgood had brought about the state of his soul—there was accordingly that amount of connection; only it became further remarkable that from the moment his companion had sounded him, and sounded him, he knew, down to the last truth of things, his disposition, his necessity to talk, the desire that had in the morning broken the spell of his confinement, the impulse that had thrown him so defeatedly into Mrs. Folliott's arms and into Florence Ash's, these forces seemed to feel their impatience ebb and their discretion suddenly grow. His companion was talking again, but just then, incongruously, made his need to communicate lose itself. It was as if his personal case had already been touched by some tender hand—and that, after all, was the modest limit of its greed. "I know now why you came back—did Lottie mention how I had wondered? But sit down, sit down—only let me, nervous beast as I am, take it standing!—and believe me when I tell you that I've now ceased to wonder. My dear chap, I *have* it! It can't but have been for poor Phil Bloodgood. He sticks out of you, the brute—as how, with what he has done to you, shouldn't he? There was a man to see me yesterday—Tim Slater, whom I don't think you know, but who's 'on' everything within about two minutes of its



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happening (I never saw such a fellow!) and who confirmed my supposition, all my own, however, mind you at first, that you're one of the sufferers. So how the devil can you *not* feel knocked? Why *should* you look as if you were having the time of your life? What a hog to have played it on *you*, on *you*, of all his friends!" So Newton Winch continued, and so the air between the two men might have been, for a momentary watcher—which is indeed what I can but invite the reader to become—that of a nervously displayed, but all considerate, as well as most acute, curiosity on the one side, and that on the other, after a little, of an eventually fascinated acceptance of so much free and in especial of so much right attention. "Do you *mind* my asking you? Because if you do I won't press; but as a man whose own responsibilities, some of 'em at least, don't differ much, I gather, from some of his, one would like to know how he was ever allowed to get to the point——! But I *do* plough you up?"

Mark sat back in his chair, moved but holding himself, his elbows squared on each arm, his hands a bit convulsively interlocked across him—very much in fact as he had appeared an hour ago in the old tapestry *bergère;* but as his rigour was all then that of the grinding effort to profess and to give, so it was considerably now for the fear of too hysterically gushing. Somehow too—since his wound was to that extent open—he winced at hearing the author of it branded. He hadn't so much minded the epithets Mrs. Folliott had applied, for they were to the appropriator of *her* securities. As the appropriator of his own he didn't so much want to brand him as—just more "amusingly" even, if one would!—to make out, perhaps, with intelligent help, how such a man, in such a relation, *could* come to tread such a path: which was exactly the interesting light that Winch's curiosity and sympathy were there to assist him to. He pleaded at any rate immediately his advertising no grievance. "I feel sore, I admit, and it's a horrid sort of thing to have had happen; but when you call him a brute and a hog I rather squirm, for brutes and hogs never live, I guess, in the sort of hell in which he now must be."

Newton Winch, before the fireplace, his hands deep in his pockets, where his guest could see his long fingers beat a tattoo



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on his thighs, Newton Winch dangled and swung himself, and threw back his head and laughed. "Well, I must say you take it amazingly!—all the more that to see you again this way is to feel that if, all along, there was a man whose delicacy and confidence and general attitude might have marked him for a particular consideration, you'd have been the man." And they were more directly face to face again; with Newton smiling and smiling *so* appreciatively; making our friend in fact almost ask himself when before a man had ever grinned from ear to ear to the effect of its so becoming him. What he replied, however, was that Newton described in those flattering terms a client temptingly fatuous; after which, and the exchange of another protest or two in the interest of justice and decency, and another plea or two in that of the still finer contention that even the basest misdeeds had always somewhere or other, could one get at it, their propitiatory side, our hero found himself on his feet again, under the influence of a sudden failure of everything but horror—a horror determined by some turn of their talk and indeed by the very fact of the freedom of it. It was as if a far-borne sound of the hue and cry, a vision of his old friend hunted and at bay, had suddenly broken in—this other friend's, this irresistibly intelligent other companion's, practically vivid projection of that making the worst ugliness real. "Oh, it's just making my wry face to somebody, and your letting me and caring and wanting to know: that," Mark said, "is what does me good; not any other hideous question. I mean I don't take any interest in *my* case—what one wonders about, you see, is what can be done for him. I mean, that is"—for he floundered a little, not knowing at last quite what he did mean, a great rush of mere memories, a great humming sound as of thick, thick echoes, rising now to an assault that he met with his face indeed contorted. If he didn't take care he should howl; so he more or less successfully took care—yet with his host vividly watching him while he shook the danger temporarily off. "I don't mind—though it's rather *that;* my having felt this morning, after three dismal dumb bad days, that one's friends perhaps would be thinking of one. All I'm conscious of now—I give you my word—is that I'd like to see him."

"You'd like to see him?"



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"Oh, I don't say," Mark ruefully smiled, "that I should like him to see *me* ——!"

Newton Winch, from where he stood—and they were together now, on the great hearth-rug that was a triumph of modern orientalism—put out one of the noted fine hands and, with an expressive headshake, laid it on his shoulder. "Don't wish him that, Monteith—don't wish him that!"

"Well, but,"—and Mark raised his eyebrows still higher—"he'd see I bear up; pretty well!"

"God forbid he should see, my dear fellow!" Newton cried as for the pang of it.

Mark had for his idea, at any rate, the oddest sense of an exaltation that grew by this use of frankness. "I'd go to him. Hanged if I wouldn't—anywhere!"

His companion's hand still rested on him. "You'd go to him?"

Mark stood up to it—though trying to sink solemnity as pretentious. "I'd go like a shot." And then he added: "And it's probably what—when we've turned round—I *shall* do."

"When 'we' have turned round?"

"Well"—he was a trifle disconcerted at the tone—"I say that because you'll have helped me."

"Oh, I do nothing but want to help you!" Winch replied—which made it right again; especially as our friend still felt himself reassuringly and sustainingly grasped. But Winch went on: "You *would* go to him—in kindness?"

"Well—to understand."

"To understand how he could swindle you?"

"Well," Mark kept on, "to try and make out with him how, after such things——!" But he stopped; he couldn't name them.

It was as if his companion knew. "Such things as you've done for him of course—such services as you've rendered him."

"Ah, from far back. If I could tell you," our friend vainly wailed—"if I could tell you!"

Newton Winch patted his shoulder. "Tell me—tell me!"

"The sort of relation, I mean; ever so many things of a



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kind——!" Again, however, he pulled up; he felt the tremor of his voice.

"Tell me, tell me," Winch repeated with the same movement.

The tone in it now made their eyes meet again, and with this presentation of the altered face Mark measured as not before, for some reason, the extent of the recent ravage. "You must have been ill indeed."

"Pretty bad. But I'm better. And you do me good"—with which the light of convalescence came back.

"I don't awfully bore you?"

Winch shook his head. "You keep me up—and you see how no one else comes near me."

Mark's eyes made out that he *was* better—though it wasn't yet that nothing was the matter with him. If there was ever a man with whom there was still something the matter——! Yet one couldn't insist on that, and meanwhile he clearly did want company. "Then there we are. I myself had no one to go to."

"You save my life," Newton renewedly grinned.

## VII

"Well, it's your own fault," Mark replied to that, "if you make me take advantage of you." Winch had withdrawn his hand, which was back, violently shaking keys or money, in his trousers pocket; and in this position he had abruptly a pause, a sensible, absence, that might have represented either some odd drop of attention, some turn-off to another thought, or just simply the sudden act of listening. His guest had indeed himself—under suggestion—the impression of a sound. "Mayn't you perhaps —if you hear something—have a call?"

Mark had said it so lightly, however, that he was the more struck with his host's appearing to turn just paler; and with it the latter now *was* listening. "You hear something?"

"I thought *you* did." Winch himself, on Mark's own pressure of the outside bell, had opened the door of the apartment—an indication then, it sufficiently appeared, that Sunday afternoons were servants', or attendants', or even trained nurses' holidays.



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It had also marked the stage of his convalescence, and to that extent—after his first flush of surprise—had but smoothed Monteith's way. At present he barely gave further attention; detaching himself as under some odd cross-impulse, he had quitted the spot and then taken, in the wide room, a restless turn—only, however, to revert in a moment to his friend's just-uttered deprecation of the danger of boring him. "If I make you take advantage of me—that is blessedly talk to me—it's exactly what I want to do. Talk to me—talk to me!" He positively waved it on; pulling up again, however, in his own talk, to say with a certain urgency: "Hadn't you better sit down?"

Mark, who stayed before the fire, couldn't but excuse himself. "Thanks—I'm very well so. I think of things and I fidget."

Winch stood a moment with his eyes on the ground. "Are you very sure?"

"Quite—I'm all right if you don't mind."

"Then as you like!" With which, shaking to extravagance again his long legs, Newton had swung off—only with a movement that, now his back was turned, affected his visitor as the most whimsical of all the forms of his rather unnatural manner. He was curiously different with his back turned, as Mark now for the first time saw it—dangling and somewhat wavering, as from an excess of uncertainty of gait; and this impression was so strange, it created in our friend, uneasily and on the spot, such a need o explanation, that his speech was stayed long enough to give Winch time to turn round again. The latter had indeed by this moment reached one of the limits of the place, the wide studio bay, where he paused, his back to the light and his face afresh presented, to let his just passingly depressed and quickened eyes take in as much as possible of the large floor, range over it with such brief freedom of search as the disposition of the furniture permitted. He was looking for something, though the betrayed reach of vision was but of an instant. Mark caught it, however, and with his own sensibility all in vibration, found himself feeling at once that it meant something and that what it meant was connected with his entertainer's slightly marked appeal to him, the appeal of a moment before, not to remain standing. Winch knew by this time quite easily enough that he was hanging fire;



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which meant that they were suddenly facing each other across the wide space with a new consciousness.

Everything had changed—changed extraordinarily with the mere turning of that gentleman's back, the treacherous aspect of which its owner couldn't surely have suspected. If the question was of the pitch of their sensibility, at all events, it wouldn't be Mark's that should vibrate to least purpose. Visibly it had come to his host that something had within the few instants remarkably happened, but there glimmered on him an induction that still made him keep his own manner. Newton himself might now resort to any manner he liked. His eyes had raked the floor to recover the position of something dropped or misplaced, and something, above all, awkward or compromising; and he had wanted his companion not to command this scene from the hearth-rug, the hearth-rug where he had been just before holding him, hypnotising him to blindness, *because* the object in question would there be most exposed to sight. Mark embraced this with a further drop—while the apprehension penetrated—of his power to go on, and with an immense desire at the same time that his eyes should seem only to look at his friend; who broke out now, for that matter, with a fresh appeal. "Aren't you going to take advantage of me, man—aren't you going to *take* it?"

Everything had changed, we have noted, and nothing could more have proved it than the fact that, by the same turn, sincerity of desire had dropped out of Winch's chords, while irritation, sharp and almost imperious, had come in. "That's because he sees I see something!" Mark said to himself; but he had no need to add that it shouldn't prevent his seeing more—for the simple reason that, in a miraculous fashion, this was exactly what he did do in glaring out the harder. It was beyond explanation, but the very act of blinking thus in an attempt at showy steadiness became one and the same thing with an optical excursion lasting the millionth of a minute and making him aware that the edge of a rug, at the point where an arm-chair, pushed a little out of position, overstraddled it, happened just not wholly to have covered in something small and queer, neat and bright, crooked and compact, in spite of the strong toe-tip surreptitiously



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applied to giving it the right lift. Our gentleman, from where he hovered, and while looking straight at the master of the scene, yet saw, as by the tiny flash of a reflection from fine metal, *under* the chair. What he recognised, or at least guessed at, as sinister, made him for a moment turn cold, and that chill was on him while Winch again addressed him—as differently as possible from any manner yet used. "I beg of you in God's name to talk to me—to *talk* to me!"

It had the ring of pure alarm and anguish, but was by this turn at least more human than the dazzling glitter of intelligence to which the poor man had up to now been treating him. "It's you, my good friend, who are in deep trouble," Mark was accordingly quick to reply, "and I ask your pardon for being so taken up with my own sorry business."

"Of course I'm in deep trouble"—with which Winch came nearer again; "but turning you on was exactly what I wanted."

Mark Monteith, at this, couldn't, for all his rising dismay, but laugh out; his sense of the ridiculous so swallowed up, for that brief convulsion, his sense of the sinister. Of such convenience in pain, it seemed, was the fact of another's pain, and of so much worth again disinterested sympathy! "Your interest was then——?"

"My interest was in your being interesting. For you *are!* And my nerves——!" said Newton Winch with a face from which the mystifying smile had vanished, yet in which distinction, as Mark so persistently appreciated it, still sat in the midst of ravage.

Mark wondered and wondered—he made strange things out. "Your nerves have needed company." He could lay his hand on him now, even as shortly before he had felt Winch's own pressure of possession and detention. "As good for you yourself, that—or still better," he went on—"than I and my grievance were to have found you. Talk to *me*, talk to *me*, Newton Winch!" he added with an immense inspiration of charity.

"That's a different matter—that others but too much can do! But I'll say this. If you want to go to Phil Blood-good——!"

"Well?" said Mark as he stopped. He stopped, and Mark had now a hand on each of his shoulders and held him at arm's-



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length, held him with a fine idea that was not disconnected from the sight of the small neat weapon he had been fingering in the low luxurious morocco chair—it was of the finest orange-colour —and then had laid beside him on the carpet; where, after he had admitted his visitor, his presence of mind coming back to it and suggesting that he couldn't pick it up without making it more conspicuous, he had thought, by some swing of the foot or other casual manœuvre, to dissimulate its visibility.

They were at close quarters now as not before and Winch perfectly passive, but with eyes that somehow had no shadow of a secret left and with the betrayal to the sentient hands that grasped him of an intense, an extraordinary general tremor. To Mark's challenge he opposed afresh a brief silence, but the very quality of it, with his face speaking, was that of a gaping wound. "Well, you needn't take *that* trouble. You see I'm such another."

"Such another as Phil ——?"

He didn't blink. "I don't know for sure, but I guess I'm worse."

"Do you mean you're guilty——?"

"I mean I shall be wanted. Only I've stayed to take it."

Mark threw back his head, but only tightened his hands. He inexpressibly understood, and nothing in life had ever been so strange and dreadful to him as his thus helping himself by a longer and straighter stretch, as it were, to the monstrous sense of his friend's "education." It had been, in its immeasurable action, the education of business, of which the fruits were all around them. Yet prodigious was the interest, for prodigious truly—it seemed to loom before Mark—must have been the system. "To 'take' it?" he echoed; and then, though faltering a little, "To take what?"

He had scarce spoken when a long sharp sound shrilled in from the outer door, seeming of so high and peremptory a pitch that with the start it gave him his grasp of his host's shoulders relaxed an instant, though to the effect of no movement in *them* but what came from just a sensibly intenser vibration of the whole man. "For *that!*" said Newton Winch.

"Then you've known——?"



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"I've expected. You've helped me to wait." And then as Mark gave an ironic wail: "You've tided me over. My condition has *wanted* somebody or something. Therefore, to complete this service, will you be so good as to open the door?"

Deep in the eyes Mark looked him, and still to the detection of no glimmer of the earlier man in the depths. The earlier man had been what he invidiously remembered—yet would *he* had been the whole simpler story! Then he moved his own eyes straight to the chair under which the revolver lay and which was but a couple of yards away. He felt his companion take this consciousness in, and it determined in them another long, mute exchange. "What do you mean to do?"

"Nothing."

"On your honour?"

"*My* 'honour'?" his host returned with an accent that he felt even as it sounded he should never forget.

It brought to his own face a crimson flush—he dropped his guarding hands. Then as for a last look at him: "You're wonderful!"

"We *are* wonderful," said Newton Winch, while, simultaneously with the words, the pressed electric bell again and for a longer time pierced the warm cigaretted air.

Mark turned, threw up his arms, and it was only when he had passed through the vestibule and laid his hand on the door-knob that the horrible noise dropped. The next moment he was face to face with two visitors, a nondescript personage in a high hat and an astrakhan collar and cuffs, and a great belted constable, a splendid massive New York "officer" of the type he had had occasion to wonder at much again in the course of his walk, the type so by itself—his wide observation quite suggested—among those of the peace-makers of the earth. The pair stepped straight in—no word was said; but as he closed the door behind them Mark heard the infallible crack of a discharged pistol and, so nearly with it as to make all one violence, the sound of a great fall; things the effect of which was to lift him, as it were, with his company, across the threshold of the room in a shorter time than that taken by this record of the fact. But their rush availed little; Newton was stretched on his back



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before the fire; he had held the weapon horribly to his temple, and his upturned face was disfigured. The emissaries of the law, looking down at him, exhaled simultaneously a gruff imprecation, and then while the worthy in the high hat bent over the subject of their visit the one in the helmet raised a severe pair of eyes to Mark. "Don't you think, sir, you might have prevented it?"

Mark took a hundred things in, it seemed to him—things of the scene, of the moment, and of all the strange moments before; but one appearance more vividly even than the others stared out at him. "I really think I must practically have caused it."



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# Un Monsieur

## By R. B. Cunninghame Graham

It may be the desire for sympathy that makes us yearn to pour our troubles into another's ear—how wise was the first Pope who hit upon auricular confession and made it sacred—that impelled Elise to tell the tale.

"He was," she said, "un Monsieur, about fifty years of age, rich, dull, and only wanting wings to fly, so much he was puffed up with his position in the world and with his wealth.

"He did not treat me badly for some time, that is to say, after the visits that he used to pay me, he generally put a ten-pound note upon the mantelpiece and get into his motor with an air as of a Jupiter who had just parted from a Danae. After he went, I generally took a bath, and would sit down to read Hérédia or Verlaine, some author or another of a kind that took me off into a world shut to such men as was my wealthy friend.

"He did not talk much; you see he was an Englishman, and seemed as if he was ashamed of speaking much to me, although of course that did not stop his visits to my house. I fancy that he regulated them on hygienic grounds, and rather thought he was a virtuous man in not allowing a full rein to what I feel assured he called the baser appetites . . . baser, eh? . . . the only ones he knew. He looked upon me, I am well aware, but as an instrument of pleasure, a sort of musical-box which he could set in motion with a ten-pound note.

"Upon my side I thought of him but as un Monsieur, a man, that is, who, neither good nor bad, yet pushed by sensuality came to me at his stated intervals and went away appeased. His kisses bothered me, and all his efforts of what he perhaps called love were of a maladroit, that used to make me laugh . . . but then, in my profession, one gets to know what to expect of men.



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"Of course he was quite unintellectual. The arts of every nature . . . love is an art"—and here she smiled and fluffed her hair out at the sides with conscious pride—"were but so many pastimes served up to him by men who lived by them. They all appeared to him a sort of intellectual *saltimbanques*, I verily believe, and he must surely have referred to them as painters, poets, fiddlers, and all that kind of thing."

She paused, and the light falling on her fair wavy hair and on her well-kept hands gave her an air of such refinement that it was hard to think of her as the wage-slave of such a man as she had just described. Tall, slight and well-proportioned, blessed with the taste that seems the birthright of the women of her race, the little jewellery she wore appeared as much a portion of herself as the faint, half-professional smile that played about her lips, from the teeth outward, when she was talking to a man.

"You must not think," she said, "that I have laid the colour on too thickly; that would be inartistic. No, he was simply, as I said, un Monsieur . . . not to use a vulgar word, which perhaps would have been better in his case.

"Ridiculous of course—*cocasse;* I am not sure if there is any word in English that quite is the equivalent of that.

"Ridiculous, preposterous, no. . . . I mean he was absurd and had what we call *une vraie tête de mari* . . . need I say more than that?

"All fat, rich men of fifty, when they make visits to such girls as we must of necessity be . . . *ah yes*, odd. To me the fact of being rich has something in it of itself that seems preposterous. Fancy how I must feel who look on love as one of the fine arts, to have to *singer* it with a dull, fat, old man, simply because he has a big account at some bank or another! Apart from morals, to which I make no claim, it is an insult to the God who, I suppose, created both of us."

As she said this she drew herself up to her full height, hollowed her back a little like a gymnast on the horizontal bar, and then went on again.

"I had not seen my Monsieur for a week or two and wondered what had happened to him, when a brougham with a pair of chestnut horses drew up at the door. Out of it got a lady, tall,



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dark, and with a sable cloak that must have cost an eye out of her head, elegant, *svelte*, well-dressed and . . . beautiful. She did not give her name, but sent a message saying that she would like to see me, and when my maid had showed her up into the room she came forward and addressed me by my name . . . but charmingly, not stiffly in the least, and without any air of patronage. I asked her to be seated, and she sat down as naturally as if she had been on a visit to a woman of her own world, and after looking at me for a moment curiously, said in good French: 'I have come about a business matter.' I did not ask her how she knew my name, but merely smiled at her, with a slight inclination of the head, wondering internally what kind of business could have brought her, and as she paused a little as if she were debating what to say, I ran my eye over her trying to recollect if I had seen her anywhere, but all to no avail. As we say, I undressed her, mentally, divining, as it were, she wore good stays and linen underneath. Her feet, of course, I saw, and her well-made French shoes and open-work silk stockings, and from her person generally there floated a faint odour of discreet perfume such as a woman of her world, who does not have to make men turn and look at her, can well afford to wear.

"She certainly was beautiful and of my type, that is, the type that I admire, with dark and glossy hair in which you might have seen your face, as in a looking-glass. All she had on I inwardly commended, her clothes and jewellery, though there was nothing in especial in the latter except a string of pearls, not large, like those in which a banker's wife or rich American, so to speak, hangs in chains, but finely shaped and dazzlingly white. All this review, of course, took but a minute, and as she did not speak a strange suspicion crossed my mind why she had come to see me, but as if she herself had read what thought was passing in my mind she blushed a little, making her look divine, and saying, 'It was on business that I came,' took from her muff a photograph, and holding it towards me asked me if I had ever seen the man.

"To my amazement, on looking at it I saw the man I have been telling you about, in all his commonness. His ears, just like an elephant's, his mottled face, and above all that air of



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thinking he was somebody only because he happened to be rich, all shouted at me.

"Still every *métier* has its etiquette, and mine, just like a lawyer's or a priest's, is, or should be, discreet. I did not like the man, and on the other hand the lady was quite charming; but I stood firm, and, after looking at the thing indifferently, answered, 'I never saw the man,' and sat expectantly. A shadow of annoyance crossed the lady's face, and once again she came back to the charge.

"'Are you quite sure,' she said, 'for I am told he is a friend of yours, and let me tell you I am rich.'

This got my back up just a little, for it appeared as if I never should get clear of riches, and it amazed me, as it annoys me now, to see rich people go about trampling on honour and on everything by the mere weight of gold. Still she was far too nice to quarrel with, so I sat quietly and smiled, and happening to catch her eye, we both stopped a half-laugh, and I, divining that she was my Monsieur's wife, wondered what her next move would be to try and make me tell. After a word or two she got up from her chair, and going to the door paused for a minute as she held it in her hand, then, turning to me smiling, said:

"'I respect your honesty; but after all what does it matter whose money that it is you take? I will pay you anything up to a thousand pounds if you but choose to recollect.

"Once more I thanked her, knowing, of course, that I was acting like a fool, but pleased to show her that I held honour above money—in spite of what I was. As she was going out she turned, and said again, 'Name your conditions'; and when I smiled and shook my head, she looked at me just for a moment, half with regret, half with approval, so that when finally she closed the door I felt, although she had not got her way, that she respected me for having made a stand against my interest.

"Three or four days had passed and the impression of the lady's visit had almost worn away, when who should come to see me but my friend.

"He looked so prosperous, and had so great an air as if the world might have belonged to him had he not been too lazy to write out a cheque . . . an oversight which, no doubt, when he



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had time enough, he would rectify . . . I hardly found it in my heart at first to tell him what had passed. As soon, however, as he began what he perhaps called love-making, and tried to draw me on to his knee, I, of course, seeing that he looked on the whole thing but as a hygienic visit, determined not to lose the chance.

" Therefore instead of letting, as I generally did, my head fall on his shoulder, closing my eyes, and thinking I was in the Calais steamer on a rough day, I pushed him off, and standing up, looked at him steadily between the eyes.

" He, for his part, knowing that he was going to pay for my complaisance, and having not an inkling of what was passing in my head, looked at me, half amazed, half puzzled, and exclaimed: ' Elise, old girl, what's up that you behave in this way to a pal ? '

" Whether it was his confidence, a confidence that neither God nor Nature had given him the right to exercise with any woman upon earth, or whether I was revolted at my ' *sale métier . . . car c'est un vrai métier de chien, tu sais,*' I do not understand. When I had got my hand free, for he tried to pull me to him and treat my attitude as a good joke, I said without a prelude : ' Your wife was here the other day.'

" He did not think I was in earnest and answered me in French, which he spoke fluently : ' *Elle est bonne, celle-là.*'

" However, when I had told him how his wife was dressed and named a bracelet that she wore he got more serious. I rather liked to tease him, and for a moment thought of saying something that would throw doubt upon his wife, but being also curious to find out what had been the real reason of her call, I merely said : ' She took your photograph out of her muff and showed it to me.'

" You never saw a man change quicker than my friend.

" ' What did you say, Elise ? ' he muttered ; and when I told him that I had quite disclaimed all knowledge of him, he took my hand in his and kissed it, exclaiming : ' Elise, you are a splendid girl. . . . My wife wants to divorce me, but we have a child, a girl of ten, old enough to appreciate the disgrace of the Divorce Court, and I would give the world to spare her.'



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"For the first time I rather liked him, for he spoke feelingly, and really seemed a man and not a money-bag. He drew me to him, and for the first time in my life I let him do so without repulsion, and holding both my hands swore I had saved him, that he would do anything in the world for me, and if I wished to lead a different life and go back home to France that he would settle money on me to help me either to learn painting, which had always been my dream, or to get married to a decent man. When I had thanked him and he had kissed me several times, but quite as a man kisses a real woman and not as he had done before upon his visits, he went away, assuring me of his eternal gratitude, and turning at the door, just as his wife had done a day or two ago, to thank me once again. This time I was *bouleversée* and sat down and cried, thinking what I would do, and came to the conclusion to go to Paris and begin work in some *atelier* under some painter of repute. I thought of all that I should do and—for the life of art cannot, of course, be quite devoid of love—determined to choose some young painter or another, whom I should live with . . . quite *en bourgeois*, and darn his socks and be as good to, for I am *très bonne fille* as I have told you, as was possible.

"That was a happy afternoon, and my task, when in the evening business sent me out to the Alhambra or some other music-hall, comparatively light. Days passed and weeks, then months, and still my grateful friend was silent, until one day, walking beside the Serpentine, I met him with his wife. He paled, and she looked at me quickly and clutching at his arm said: '*Tiens! C'est elle.*'

"I made no sign, but fixed my eyes upon a child sailing his boat and passed upon my way. That's all," said Elise, "and for the man, at first, I thought he was a *lâche* and then a scoundrel; but now I know he was but a rich man—'un Monsieur'—and probably to-day, if he thinks of the matter now and then, promptly dismisses it, and says as he lights up a big cigar: 'She was a prostitute.'"



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# White Duck

## By W. H. Hudson

The green colour of earth is pale in this March month to what it will be a few weeks hence; nevertheless on this evening, a fortnight before the first day of spring, after a long day spent sauntering in quiet places in this Norfolk land, I seem to have been living in the greenest of worlds. Grass and the colour of it is so grateful to me, and even necessary to my well-being, that when removed from the sight of it I am apt to fall into a languishing state, a dim and despondent mind, like one in prison or sick and fallen on the days

> Which are at best but dull and hoary,
> Meer glimmering and decays.

How good for mind and body, then, to be abroad at this time when the increasing power of the sun begins to work a perceptible change in the colour of earth! How natural that at such a season, just at the turn of the year, I should take an entire day in the fields solely to look at the grass, to rejoice in it again after the long wintry months, nourishing my mind on it even as old King Nebuchadnezzar nourished his body! The sight of it was all I went for, all I wanted, and whatever I saw besides pleased me only because it formed a suitable background, or made it seem brighter by contrast or served in some way to set it off. Old red-brick farmhouses, seen at a distance, nestling among evergreens and large, leafless trees, in many cases the deep, sloping roofs stained all over with orange-coloured lichen; quiet little hamlets too, half hidden beneath their great elms as under a reddish purple cloud; the endless grey, winding road, with low thorn hedges on either side, winding with it, leafless and a deep purple brown in colour except where ivy had grown



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over and covered them with dark green, brown-veined leaves silvered with the sunlight. A hundred things beside—red cows grazing on a green field, a flock of starlings wheeling about overhead and anon dropping to the ground; gulls, too, resting in another field, white and pale grey, their beaks turned to the wind: they were like little bird-shaped drifts of snow lying on the green turf, shining in the sun. For all day long the weather was perfect—a day of soft wind and bright sunshine following a spell of cold, rough weather with flooding rains; a soft blue sky peopled with white and pale grey clouds travelling before the wind.

And seeing these things—seeing and forgetting as one sees whatever comes into the field of vision when eyes and mind are occupied with some other thing—the time went on until a little past noon, when I suddenly came upon a new sight which gave me a thrill and held me, and after I had passed on would not allow me to drop out of my mind. All the objects I had seen that day, the lichened farmhouses and grey barns, trees and road and purple hedges, red and black cows in a green field, and gulls and rooks and distant low hills and pine-woods, with many more, had appeared to me but as a fringe and small parts of an irregular scattered pattern on the green mantle of earth. This new sight was of a different order, for it took me out of my spring-grass mood, and the green mantle which had seemed the chief thing was now but a suitable setting to this lovely object.

This, then, is what I saw. In the middle of a green pasture I came on a pool of rain-water, thirty or forty feet long, collected in a depression in the ground, of that blue colour sometimes seen in a shallow pool in certain states of the atmosphere and sunlight—an indescribable and very wonderful tint, unlike the blue of a lake or of the deep sea, or of any blue flower or mineral, but you perhaps think it more beautiful than any of these; and if it must be compared with something else it perhaps comes nearest to deep sapphire blues. When an artist in search of a subject sees it he looks aside and, going on his way, tries to forget it, as when he sees the hedges hung with spiders' lace sparkling with rainbow-coloured dewdrops, knowing that these effects are



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beyond the reach of his art. And on this fairy lake in the midst of the pale green field, its blue surface ruffled by the light wind, floated three or four white ducks; whiter than the sea-gulls, for they were all purest white, with no colour except on their yellow beaks. The light wind ruffled their feathers too, a little, as they turned this way and that, disturbed at my approach; and just then, when I stood to gaze, the sun shone full out after the passing of a light cloud, and flushed the blue pool and floating birds, silvering the ripples and causing the plumage to shine as if with a light of its own.

"I have never seen a more beautiful thing!" I exclaimed to myself; and now at the end of the long day it remains in my mind, vividly as when I looked at it at that moment when the sunbeams fell on it, and is so persistent that I have no choice but to write it down. The beauty I saw was undoubtedly due to the peculiar conditions—to the blue colour of the water, the ruffling wind, the whiteness of the plumage, and the sudden magic of the sunlight; but the effect would not have been so entrancing if the floating birds had not also been beautiful in themselves—in shape and in their surpassing whiteness.

Now I am quite sure the reader will smile and perhaps emit the sound we usually write *pish*—a little sibilant sound expressing contempt. For though he will readily admit that the sun beautifies many things, he draws the line at a duck—the common domestic one. Like all of us, he has his prepossessions and can't get away from them. Every impression, we are told by Professor James, no sooner enters the consciousness than it is drafted off in some determinate direction, making connection with the other materials there, and finally producing a reaction. In this instance the impression is the story of a duck described as beautiful, the reaction an incredulous smile. The particular connections it strikes into are determined by our past experiences and the association of the present impression with them. The impression arouses its old associates; they go to meet it; it is received by them, and rearranged by the mind. It is the fate of every impression thus to fall into a mind preoccupied with memories, ideas, and interests. This mental escort is drawn from the mind's ready-made stock. Our philosopher adds: "In all



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apperceptive operations of the mind a certain general law makes itself felt—the law of economy. In admitting a new experience we instinctively seek to disturb as little as possible the pre-existing stock of ideas."

All this is illuminating and helpful, since it enables me to see into my smiling reader's mind and to indulge in a smile on my part. For with what in this case will the object described (a white duck) connect itself? What are the memories, ideas, interests, already in stock which will be its associates and form its escort and take it in? They are of the duck as he has seen, eaten, and known it all his life—the familiar duck of the farmyard, a heavy bird that waddles in its walk and is seen dibbling in horse-ponds or in any mud-puddle. It is the bird which the hen-wife fattens for the market while her husband is fattening the pigs. If any pleasing memories or associations connect themselves with it they are not of an æsthetic character: they refer to the duck without its feathers, to its smell and taste when eaten with green peas in their season.

If I am asked how I escaped from these inconvenient, not to say degrading, associations, the only answer would be that associations of another kind were probably formed at some early period. Perhaps when my infant eyes began to look at the world, when I had no stock of ideas, no prepossessions at all, except with regard to milk, I saw a white duck and was delighted at it. In any case the feeling for its beauty goes far back. I remember some years ago when strolling by the Itchen I stood to admire a white duck floating on the clear current where it is broad and shallow and where the flowering wild musk was abundant. The rich moist green of the plant made the white plumage seem whiter, and the flowers and the duck's beak were both a very beautiful yellow. "If," thought I, "the white duck were as rare in England as the white swallow, or even the white blackbird, half the inhabitants of Winchester would turn out and walk to this spot to see and admire so lovely a thing."

Many and many a time have I stopped in my walk or ride to admire such a sight, but the white ducks seen to-day, floating, sun-flushed, on a blue pool in a green field, had a higher loveliness, a touch of the extra-natural, and served to recall an old tradition



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of a primitive people concerning the country of the sky, where the dead inhabit, and all trees and flowers abound as on earth, and all animals and birds, including ducks, but more beautiful than here below. Every one may know that the country is there because of the blueness; for the air, the void, has no colour, but all matter seen at a distance appears blue—water and trees and mountains; only the sky country is at so vast a distance that we see nothing but the blue colour of it. But there are openings or windows in the great plain, and these are the stars, and through these windows the clear, brilliant light of that country shines down on us when it is dark.

How do the dead get there—flying like soaring birds, up, up, up, until they come to it? They can certainly fly like birds, but no high-soaring bird and no disembodied spirit can rise by flying to so immense a height; yet when men die they have no thought and desire but for that country, and have no rest or pleasure here, but roam up and down the earth, flying from the sight of human beings, even of their nearest relations and friends, because they are now invisible to mortal eyes, and to find themselves unrecognised and unheard when they speak and no longer remembered is intolerable to them. Therefore, by day, when people are abroad, they fly to forests and uninhabited places, where they lie, but at night they come forth to range the earth in the form of owls and night-jars and loons and rails and all other wandering night-birds with wild and lamentable voices. Night by night they wander, crying out their misery and asking of those they meet to tell them of some way of escape from earth so that they might come at last to the country of the dead; but none can tell them, for they are all in the same miserable case, seeking a way out. But at last, after months and perhaps years, they come in their wanderings to the end of the earth and the stupendous walls and pillars of stone which hold up the immense plain of the sky; there they eventually discover some way by which to ascend and reach that happy country which is their home.

It was not always so; once the passage from earth to heaven was comparatively an easy one; there was a way then known to every one, dead or living, in the world. It was a tree growing on the river-bank, so high that its topmost branches reached up



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to heaven. Imagine what a tree that was, its buttressed trunk so big round that a hundred men with arms outspread and hands touching could not have spanned it! There was ample room under the shade of its lower branches for the entire nation to gather and sit at meat, every one in his place. On higher branches great birds had their nesting-places, and higher still other great birds, eagles and vultures and storks, might be seen soaring skywards, circling upwards until they appeared like black specks in the blue, but beyond these specks the tree rose still until it faded from sight and mixed itself with the universal blue of heaven. By this tree the dead ascended to their future home, climbing like monkeys, and flitting and flying like birds from branch to branch, until they came to the topmost branches and to an opening in the great plain, through which they passed into that bright and beautiful place.

Unhappily this tree fell a long time ago—oh, a very long time ago! If you were to range the whole earth in search of the oldest man in it, and at last discovered him sitting in his cabin, bent down like a dead man, with his claw-like fingers clasped together on his knees, his brown face covered with a hundred wrinkles, his hair white, and his eyes turned white too with blindness, and asked him of the tree, he would say that it fell before his time, a long time before, perhaps in his grandfather's or great-grandfather's time, or even before then. And this is how it fell—it is surely one of the saddest chapters in the history of the world!

It came to pass that an old and evil-tempered woman died, and, going to the tree, in due time reached the sky, and was happy to find herself at last in that bright and beautiful place. She was very hungry after her long journey and climb, and, making inquiry of those she met, they told her very pleasantly that the readiest way to procure food was to catch some fish in one of the lakes close by. They also gave her a rod and line and directed her to the nearest lake. Away she went, pleased with herself and everything, her mouth watering at the thought of those green and blue and red and yellow little fishes which were easy to catch and delicious to eat. It was a small round lake of clear water, about a mile in circumference, to which she had been directed,



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and on approaching it she saw that a good number of persons were there standing, rod in hand, on the margin. One of the anglers, happening to turn his head, caught sight of the old woman hurrying down to them, and to have a little fun he cried out to those near him: "Look! here comes an old woman, just arrived, to fish; let's close up and say there is no room for another here and have a laugh at her expense."

Here the reader must be told that the part of a man which survives death is in appearance the exact counterpart of the man when alive. To mortal eyes he is invisible, being of so thin a substance; but the dead and immortal see him as he was, young or old and ugly, with his grey hair and wrinkles and every sign of suffering and care and passion on his countenance. And as with the face and the whole body so it is with the mind: if it has been evil, full of spite and malice, it is so still. But he must be told, too, that this state is not permanent, for in that bright and buoyant atmosphere it is impossible for the marks of age and misery to endure; they fade out as the easy, happy existence finds its effect; they grow youthful in appearance once more; and the change is also in the mind. The old woman had, alas; not been long enough in that happy land for any change to have taken place in either her appearance or her spiteful temper.

That was how the people by the lake no sooner beheld the new-comer than they knew her for what she had been, and was still—a spiteful old woman; and being of a merry disposition they were only too ready to take part in the joke. As she drew near they closed up and cried out: "No room for another fisher here; go farther on and find yourself a place."

On she went; but those who were farther up saw what the fun was, and they too in their turn cried: "No room, no room here, old woman; go a little farther on." And she went on, only to be sent farther still, until she had gone all the way round the lake and was back at the spot where she had started, where she was received with a shout of laughter and the cry of "No room here, old woman."

Then in a rage she flung the rod down, and, cursing the people for making a fool of her, she fled from their laughter; and, arrived back at that very opening through which she had climbed



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into heaven, she cast herself down on the upper branches of the great tree and began her long descent to earth again. She alone of all the dead who had reached that country turned her back on it and returned to this world, to our everlasting sorrow. Arrived at the earth, and mad with rage and the desire of revenge, she turned herself into a huge water-rat, a creature found by that river, a rat as big as a retriever dog, with four great teeth, hard and sharp as steel chisels, two in the upper and two in the lower jaw. Making herself a den at the roots of the mighty tree, she began gnawing the wood, working day and night for many, many days, and for months and years; and if ever she grew tired of her huge task she thought of the indignity she had suffered and of the mocking laughter of the people by the lake, and was roused to fresh fury and continued exertions. In this way the great roots and lower part of the trunk were riddled through and through and hollowed out. Nor was it known to any one what the malignant old woman was doing, since the vast quantities of wood which she threw out were carried away by floods and the current of the great river. Thus even to the end did her evil spirit sustain her, and the tree bent and swayed in the mighty wind, and at last fell with a noise as of many thunders, shaking the world with its fall, and filling all its inhabitants with terror. Only when they saw the tree which had stood like a vast green pillar reaching to the sky lying prone across the world did they know the dreadful thing which had been done.

So ended that great tree named Caligdawa; and so ends my story, originally taken down from the lips of wise old men who preserved the history and traditions of their race by a missionary priest, and read by me in my early youth in the volume in which he relates it.

But I will venture to say that the story has not been dragged in here; I had no thought of using it when I sat down this evening to write about a white duck. That vision of the sunlit, surprisingly white, yellow-billed ducks floating on the wind-rippled blue pool—for it was like a vision—had to be told; but how, unless I said that it was like a glimpse into some unearthly place where all things are as on earth, only more beautiful in the brighter atmosphere? My blue pool with white birds floating



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on it, in a spring-green field, blown on by the wind and shone on and glorified by the sun, was like a sudden vision, a transcript of that far-up country.

And now, just at the finish, another chance thought comes to help me. The thought has, in fact, been stated already when I said that half the inhabitants of Winchester would turn out to gaze at and admire the white duck seen by the Itchen if white ducks were rare as white swallows in the land. How many things which are beautiful seem not so because of their commonness and of the uses to which they are put! What comes now to help me is the memory of a matter in old English history. Close upon a thousand years ago there lived a very beautiful lady of whom little is known except that she was an earl's daughter, and that the young king, who had a passion for beauty exceeding that of all men, even in those wild and violent times, loved and made her his queen. After bearing him a son, who was king too in his time, she died, to England's lasting sorrow. And she was known throughout the realm as the *White Duck*, on account of her great beauty. We can only suppose that at that distant period the white duck was a rarity in England, therefore that those who saw it looked with concentrated attention at it, as we look at any rare and lovely thing—a kingfisher, let us say—and were able to appreciate its perfect loveliness.



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# The Dancing Dervish

By Dennis Ames

"Ah, poor bird! Thou art in bad case I fear!"

The old Dervish turned abruptly in his steps, half-ran, half-tottered towards the white heap which lay in feathered tangle underneath the moss-grown seat circling the tall iron-grated well, and sank down on his knees beside it.

"My poor, poor thing!" he murmured tenderly.

He passed his lean hand across the stricken creature's body, ridiculous in its misery, like a drying-mop, and pulled it gently by the neck to his side.

"Come, let old Rebek see."

He searched its stark, unseeing eyes, and smoothed its ruffled plumes.

"Alas, my poor stork! only Allah can save thee now!" The filmy eyes of the stork, clouded with the palsy of death, lingered as if wistfully upon the old man's face.

"Well, thou shalt die comfortably, at any rate."

It was not so easy a matter as he had thought, for a full-grown stork is no light weight for a Turk of seventy years and more, but the old Dervish managed to pick it up and, carrying it across the little square, deposited it upon a low wooden bench, strewn with straw, fashioned in an alcove under the white over-hanging house which was at once his home and the hospital for the storks of the city.

He sprinkled a little water on the animal's bill, tucked in the helpless straggling legs, shook his head, and seated himself on the ground to nurse it.

Almost immediately, for the news went instantly about, every man and beast in the square pressed before the little hospital recess, where the Dervish sat in meditation, watching



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the dying bird. There slept no Turk or Greek or infidel in all the holy town of Broussa who did not know Rebek, the old Dervish of the Zahta-Kalé, which is the square or sacred hospital of the stork, for the ministrations of the old man to the sick and injured creatures entrusted to his care were of a tradition old as the oldest beard in the ancient capital of Turkey could remember, and famous even across the purple hills. Many a stricken stork and animal the old man had nursed back to life in Zahta-Kalé. The very pariah dogs, accursed by Islam as unclean, were bigger and fatter there than those in any other quarter of the city; and the doves and pigeons of the Great Mosque hard by billed and cooed in the tall spreading plane-trees, and men trod piously across its rude cobbles, and the birds were sacred and inviolate.

But not a man among the crowd spoke; not even the butcher listlessly flicking the big fly-flapper against his blood-stained apron, nor the half-naked children, crowding with the dogs around.

Death is always an arresting incident, picturesque and strange, and moreover sacred, as the will of Allah, but too common, too natural to all Mussulmans to offer more than a momentary attraction as a spectacle in the East, where the attitude of mind towards life and of life towards death, steeped for centuries in the faith of a fatalistic exultation, shines like the desert, like the implacable sun, serene and pitiless. Even the sacred stork must fain die—every Turk knew that—like priests and men and all things born of life. It was only the manifestation, the agony, of death, which could be regarded as in the least bit interesting.

Soon, noiselessly, mysteriously as it had arisen, the idle group of onlookers melted away. The butcher returned to his stall, the vendor of silks and muslins to his gaudy festooned booth, the pot and pan maker to his tray, the black-robed wrinkled Jew to his rude table-seat at the corner of the square leading into the "Flea market," which served him as office of money-changer. A few kicks sent the donkeys who had strayed in and about the crowd back to their places under the shade by the great well. Even the children vanished, tired of death's



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dull protraction. Once more the hub of interests in the little square resumed their mart and articulation. The old Dervish sat alone in silence upon the ground, soothing the stork's agony.

A crane with its wing bound up in a dirty rag strode near, and cast daintily about. Some storks, noticing the Dervish, whom they knew so well, sitting by the bird, shot out their wings and fluttered up to him, craning their long necks forward expectantly for food. A one-eyed raven flew down, cawing, from the roof.

Through the tall, shading plane-trees which towered above the crazy-coloured, infinitely picturesque and dilapidated square, the sun poured quivering shafts of gold, streaking the terraced, overhanging roofs, the balconies red with carpets and dazzling rainbow hangings, and the little latticed windows, with beams of mottled light. Under the planes by the well a camel lay, idly blinking. In a corner, perched grotesquely up against the white, shimmering wall a blind beggar rocked to and fro in the sun, whining mechanically for alms. Ceaselessly crossing and recrossing the square, the donkeys picked their weary ways, so laden that only their dainty velvet legs peeped out, like spilikins, from under their huge burdens.

Higher and higher rose the sun and sent its torrid fire upon Zahta-Kalé, the sacred hospital, where the dogs lay coiled in sleep and the storks hobbled in and about, but still the old man sat on silently through the morning hours, watching and ministering to the bird. From time to time his tall conical Dervish hat nodded quaintly up and down, while the song of life played round him, and in his eyes, fixed upon the dying stork, there burned a light as of some solemn understanding.

The old Dervish had been very ill himself of late, so ill that men thought he would never dance again on Fridays at the Sama, or service of the Mevlevi Dervishes; for his years were plenty, and in his furrowed, beaten face there had crept a serenity which, men say, presages the call of Allah. Death was no evil, he knew, and like evil had only a relative significance in the terrestial cycle of things. Life was only an episode, a condition of being integral only of that incalculably greater and more perfect existence which with the planets, the moon,



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and all the bodies in the skies swirled and whirled through space and the æons of eternity. He had no fear of death; not he, for over half a century priest of the dancing Dervishes; who all his life had sought the mystery of God in the sacramental stimulus of the Dervish dance; but as he sat there watching the ebbing life of the bird, it seemed to him to spell his augury.

To be sure, his days were wellnigh numbered, he recognised that calmly and gratefully. What was there beyond the great sleep to frighten him! All his years he had worked hard for the good of man and animals and things, devout in the expression of his belief. His life had not been altogether without its trials. Nay, its very virtue lay in humility, in its unswerving single purpose along the road of revelation. For he was no ordinary unlettered peasant, but born of a noble stock, and in the years when his limbs were beautiful and his eyes were ardent there had come to him a fierce, blinding passion for a strange white woman from the West for whom he had left all, his faith, his home, and country, plunged in orgasms of love. Far over the white mountains, across the barren desert and the seas he had followed her, and loved her as he loved the great white star, for she was as a golden flame, more beautiful than suns. Then one day she tired of him; bade him return to his own country, to his faith, to his home, and so he left her; and when he returned his love and all the learning that he had acquired from books and communings with wise men in far-off lands seemed to him like the mock phantoms of the desert, and the faith that he had forsworn came back to him.

True, he had been disappointed in some ways. He was older, more loved, too, than the venerable Sheikh or High Priest of his order; yet, after all these years of love unstinted and service in the long vale of humility, he had not attained to any office or authority in his sect: he was only one of the many whirling Dervishes in the Tekké where he danced—where he had danced every Friday for fifty-five years.

Well—he was ready! That afternoon, forbidden as he had been that week to dance, he would join his fellow-priests in the sacred ceremony as usual, and attain the ecstasy of the immortal state. There were moments in his youth when he



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doubted, doubted very credence in the immanence of his God, whether the dancing Dervish ritual had more spiritual reality than any other magic rite which shaped men's souls and destinies: but with years such doubt had passed. There was a God, he knew, eternal, omnipotent, revelatory in all life's manifestations and mysteries, as there was a world of dreams beyond. And as the world and the universe revolved unceasingly around, crashing and circling through the infinitude, so he would whirl, aged as he was, in the motion of divine emotion, as fast and fearless as the youngest of the priests, whereby alone man found the calm of perfect oblivion and the sacramental mystery of life.

"Let it be love!" he murmured to himself, repeating the formula of his ritual. If in the midst of his illumination, Allah should think well to summons him, what had he, tottering on the abyss of mortality, to complain of! He had little now to live for, he who was already too old to tender even the sick. His storks and animals—some other hand would carry on his work. He had seen to that some time ago. No, no, not for all his years and infirmity would he miss the dance that afternoon, miss that frenzy of exultation which passed upon the mosque and into the souls of the dancers, and gathered them up into sublimity.

The sun beat down upon the tall planes, and still the old Dervish sat and rocked upon the ground, nor did he move until the last quiver had subsided and the stork laid out its neck, stark and tranquil, upon the straw. Then the old man rose slowly to his feet, and for a long while gazed steadfastly towards the East.

He had still the hot afternoon hours to while away before the service of the Dervishes began, so he made for the cool solitude of the cemetery of the Sultans, which lies in a sequestered nook upon a hillock high above the dappled city under the green sycamore and cypress. He sat down there on the grass, leaning his back against one of the great tombs and told his life's tale.

All around, the turbaned tombs of the Sultans rose in pinnacled white marble slabs above him, and above the tombs the long arms of the sycamore and cypress shed their silvering,



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verdant shade, peaceful with a great age. As he looked down upon the old town, glistening upon the green plain, his heart grew full with reverence. The hundred and one minarets of the mosques pointed above the holy city, white and shivering in the sun, like things articulate with fate. He smiled. Yes, they were right, those men of Islam, who built towns by the plashing waters, and made Broussa the City of Mosques! They gleamed everywhere, those dumb white domes, grotesque, fanatical, botched among the fountains and the orchards of the old Turkish capital cushioned against the blue forest upland. In all Asia Minor there was no city so green, so sweet and fragrant where the waters, flowing in from the mountains, murmured such joyous music, or the gardens were so hot with scent. They were right those Sultans, lying under their silken Persian carpets in those uncouth, marble tombs, who taught men the virtue of the cool waters. They spoke truly those scintillating mosques, flaunting the crescent against the deep blue vault, with their altars set towards the East from where the sun, the father of all joy and being, mounted red with fire above the line! Yes, life went on, circling round the pivot of unending destiny, and there was no end, no reason palpable!

Then as he mused, from above the city, streaming, as it were, from the skies, the song of the priests, calling out the hour of prayer, struck with a shrill blast upon the even stillness. The Dervish listened with the glow of divination. From every minaret the invocation flew, in haunting, piercing cadence, and swept like a shudder of agony into the soul. The old man rose to his feet.

He stood up tall and erect with hands outstretched towards the falling sun. Three times he cast himself upon his knees and kissed the ground that he realised now he would never see again; then once more he rose, very straight and dignified, and waved his hand in solemn salaam of farewell towards the green, laughing plain, and without glancing again to the left or right, strode on towards the mosque.

The blue of evening was already deepening as he entered the little Tekké where the Dervishes, robed in their loose, white, flowing garments, sat, cross-legged, upon the floor,



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chanting the first Sura of the Koran. The Sheikh, seated upon the holy carpet placed in front of the simple Mihrab, glanced somewhat reproachfully at him, the old man thought, as he took his place silently among the chanting priests, who in another moment all rose with bowed heads to their feet to repeat the creed of their belief.

"*La ilâha, illa 'llah!*" ("There is no God but God!")

Slowly, rhythmically, in deep base tones, the chant swelled up into the mosque, while the heads and shoulders of the Dervishes swayed slowly to and fro, and the gleam of ecstasy mounted in their straining eyes.

"*La ilâha, illa 'llah!*"

Louder and deeper with every second strophe growing more passionate and appealing, the forty voices intoned their melancholy chant, and it was like the sound of a mighty organ. In deep, sonorous volumes the chords resounded through the little mosque, and rang against the latticed gallery of the women, upon the white barrelled ceiling and the walls streaked with gigantic zigzag writings from the Koran, and out in mournful monotone through the open portal where a cripple crouched and moaned his ragged misery.

"*La ilâha, illa 'llah!*"

Suddenly, just when the chant seemed to have become mechanical, a thing inherent to the blue shadows of the mosque, the voices stopped, as it were, with one breath. Very reverently, already lost to the outward world in spiritual ecstasy, the forty Dervishes bowed their heads, sank on their knees, prostrated themselves five times with their foreheads upon the polished wooden floor, and sat with folded hands cross-legged upon their little carpets in silent, pent devotion.

The High Priest rose, stepped into the centre of the mosque, and began very slowly to turn and chant in prayer.

And as he chanted, turning slowly round and round with a curious even swing and motion of the feet, the orchestra, high up in the musicians' gallery, began in sweet accompaniment. Slowly the Sheikh revolved upon his own axis and chanted "*Allah, Allah, Allah,*" like a wizard circling in some magic spell, while the Dervishes sat upon their legs and rocked



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their tall conical hats and the dim light melted into shades of sapphire.

He turned and turned, but now he was silent; only the music played the soft prelude of the dance, which is the ritual of the Kurdish Dervishes. It sounded rapt and mysterious, like all music that is invisible, rippling with a soft, swaying movement, sad and vibrating, yet buoyant with the rhythm of glad dance. Plaintive, wavering, wailing long sweet liquid notes, the clarionet and ancient Kurdish flutes and pipes blew out the old, Eastern strains in melody so soft and sad, so delicately attuned and modulated that it was like the orchestra of dreams, like sound unheard, haunting, as a perfume or memory.

Circling, pivoting, the Sheikh revolved among the silent rocking priests, while the rhapsody of the wood-wind flowed in waves of gentle melody into their hearts and all the world went out. Soft and liquid, moaning as with torment of desire and pain, the music floated from the little gallery, wafted as by some hidden charm. It cried, interpretative of love and woe and cruel imaginings. Imperceptible at first, then soft and disturbing, the mellow tones of the strings stole voluptuously upon the sighing wood, accentuating and directing the rhythm.

Slowly, mechanically now, the Sheikh turned and turned. The old Dervish, sitting upon his legs, leant towards the sensuous melody which touched him as the shiver of a caress.

This music, he had heard it since his childhood, and it was wonderful, and ever new to him. It was this, from origins unknown, that had given man the inspiration of the dance in ages remote as the very beginnings—the revolving, physical rapture of the Dervish dance. Every time that he had heard it, he had felt its magic, which seemed to purl, cool as mountain water, into the senses, firing the blood with love, more exquisite than all pleasure upon earth, more tender than the very mercy of death. It was the voice of truth, the beautiful, absolute, everlasting truth—and, as he listened to its harmonies and syncopated repetitions it seemed to tear his soul and lift him into eternity.

Now a shrill violin sobbed exultingly high above the mellow flutes, and the Sheikh turned faster to its call. The music swelled,



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surging loud, louder and struck fierce blasts of plangent discord, and again the deep bass voices of the Dervishes took up the solemn invocation. A kind of frenzy seemed to possess the players. The rude instruments clashed and shrieked and moaned and wailed. It was like the music of men gone mad.

"*La ilâha, illa 'llah!*"

The Dervishes all rose to their feet, chanting the dirge-like credo of their faith. Again the music faded; once more the mellifluous melody of the pipes fluted soft and melancholy from the gallery.

"*La ilâha, illa 'llah!*"

Loud and louder pealed the rolling chant and the voices sounded like the swift tramp of muffled feet, while the Dervishes rocked their heads in rhythm. Suddenly, the old Dervish, who led the dance, bent forward, kissed the venerable High Priest's hand and began to turn silently upon his left foot, with a motion so even as to appear almost mechanical, spinning, circling, gliding round the mosque. His eyes were closed. His arms were outstretched, suspended listlessly in the air. Circling, revolving faster and faster, with curious even convolutions he glided silently away, like an automaton. One by one, the forty Dervishes followed, spinning, gliding, their loose voluminous robes flowing out in shivering sheets of white, their long arms extended, rigid and motionless, their eyes shut, while their bare feet groaned and twisted on the polished boards.

Round and round the dim mosque they flitted, like tops, circle within circle, keeping ever the same distance apart with strange intuitional precision, faster, faster, silent, rotating after the manner of the planets crashing and circling through infinitude. In the centre, the aged Sheikh, swaying curiously to and fro, chanted and goaded them on to ever quicker and more frenzied convolutions.

"There is no God but God!"

For full five-and-thirty minutes they danced, pirouetting, circling round the mosque, as were they spheres and systems, gathering the spiritual illumination. The sweat of them dropped in glistening beads upon the floor. They looked like spectral shapes, serpentining in the blue light. The music wailed and



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shivered in wild Bacchanalian repetition, yet still the forty Dervishes turned and spinned, and spinned and turned, chasing the blue darkening shadows of the little mosque. They were without all sense or consciousness now. Their bodies swayed with giddiness and exhaustion; their mouths hung open; the breath steamed from their throats.

"*La ilâha, illa 'llah!*"

Again the violins shrieked.

Suddenly from the gliding, rapt procession a white mass fell, stiff and headlong, to the floor, colliding with a dull resounding thud.

Only the aged Sheikh, chanting before the Mihrab, saw or heard the fall, but he knew instinctively that it was Rebek, the old Dervish, who had been "called." He stepped hastily forward towards the white heap, ridiculous, like a drying mop, with the loose robes folded about it, and gazed wistfully into the staring, blood-shot eyes, shining there in the ecstasy of death.

Round the mosque the Dervishes fluttered on, silent, implacable, like raddled hoops of fate.



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# The New Machiavelli

## By H. G. Wells

"A closer examination . . . shows that Abelard was a Nominalist under a new name."—G. H. Lewis, *Hist. Philos.*

"It suffices for our immediate purpose that tender-minded and tough-minded people . . . do both exist."—William James, *Pragmatism.*

## BOOK THE FIRST: THE MAKING OF A MAN

### CHAPTER THE FIRST

#### CONCERNING A BOOK THAT WAS NEVER WRITTEN

§ 1. Since I came to this place I have been very restless, wasting my energies in the futile beginning of ill-conceived books. One does not settle down very readily at two-and-forty to a new way of living, and I have found myself with the teeming interests of the life I have abandoned still buzzing like a swarm of homeless bees in my head. My mind has been full of confused protests and justifications. In any case I should have found difficulties enough in expressing the complex thing I have to tell, but it has added greatly to my trouble that I have a great analogue, that a certain Niccolo Machiavelli chanced to fall out of politics at very much the age I have reached, and wrote a book to engage the restlessness of his mind, very much as I have wanted to do. He wrote about the relation of the great constructive spirit in politics to individual character and weaknesses, and so far his achievement lies like a deep rut in the road of my intention. It has taken me far astray. It is a matter of many weeks now—diversified, indeed, by some long drives into the mountains behind us and a memorable sail to Genoa across the blue and purple waters that drowned Shelley—since I began a laboured and futile imitation of *The Prince*. I sat up late last night with the jumbled accumulation; and at last made a little fire of olive twigs and burnt it all, sheet by sheet—to begin again clear this morning.

But incidentally I have re-read most of Machiavelli, not excepting those scandalous letters of his to Vettori, and it seems to me, now that I have released myself altogether from his literary precedent, that he still has his use for me. In spite of his vast prestige I claim kindred with him and set his name upon my title-page, in partial intimation of the matter of my story. He takes me with sympathy not only by reason of the dream he pursued and the humanity of his politics, but by the mixture of his



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nature. His vices come in, essential to my issues. He is dead and gone, all his immediate correlations to party and faction have faded to insignificance, leaving only on the one hand his broad method and conceptions, and upon the other his intimate living personality, exposed down to its salacious corners, as the soul of no contemporary can ever be exposed. Of those double strands it is I have to write, of the subtle, protesting, perplexing play of instinctive passion and desire against too abstract a dream of statesmanship. But things that seemed to lie very far apart in Machiavelli's time have come near to one another; it is no simple story of white passions struggling against the red that I have to tell.

The State-making dream is a very old dream indeed in the world's history. It plays too small a part in novels. Plato and Confucius are but the highest of a great host of minds that have had a kindred aspiration, have dreamt of a world of men better ordered, happier, finer, securer. They imagined cities grown more powerful and peoples made rich and multitudinous by their efforts; they thought in terms of harbours and shining navies, great roads engineered marvellously, jungles cleared and deserts conquered, the ending of muddle and diseases and dirt and misery, the ending of confusions that waste human possibilities; they thought of these things with passion and desire as other men think of the soft lines and tender beauty of women. Thousands of men there are to-day almost mastered by this white passion of statecraft, and in nearly every one who reads and thinks you could find, I suspect, some sort of answering response. But in every one it presents itself extraordinarily entangled and mixed up with other, more intimate things.

It was so with Machiavelli. I picture him at San Casciano as he lived in retirement upon his property after the fall of the Republic, perhaps with a twinge of the torture that punished his conspiracy still lurking in his limbs. Such twinges could not stop his dreaming. Then it was *The Prince* was written. All day he went about his personal affairs, saw homely neighbours, dealt with his family, gave vent to everyday passions. He would sit in the shop of Donato del Corno gossiping curiously among vicious company, or pace the lonely woods of his estate, book in hand, full of bitter meditations. In the evening he returned home and went to his study. At the entrance, he says, he pulled off his peasant clothes, covered with the dust and dirt of that immediate life, washed himself, put on his "noble Court dress," closed the door on the world of toiling and getting, private loving, private hating, and personal regrets, sat down with a sigh of contentment to those wider dreams.

I like to think of him so, with brown books before him lit by the light of candles in silver candlesticks, or heading some new chapter of *The Prince*, with a grey quill in his clean, fine hand.

So writing, he becomes a symbol for me, and none the less because of his animal humour, his queer indecent side, and because of such lapses into utter meanness as that which made him sound the note of the begging-letter writer even in his "Dedication," reminding His Magnificence very urgently, as if it were the gist of his matter, of the continued malignity of fortune in his affairs. These flaws complete him. They are my reason for preferring him as a symbol to Plato, of whose indelicate side we know nothing, and whose correspondence with Dionysius of Syracuse has perished, or to Confucius, who travelled China in search of a prince he might



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instruct, with lapses and indignities now lost in the mists of ages. They have achieved the apotheosis of individual forgetfulness, and Plato has the added glory of that acquired beauty, that bust of the Indian Bacchus which is now indissolubly mingled with his tradition. They have passed into the world of the ideal, and every humbug takes his freedoms with their names. But Machiavelli, more recent and less popular, is still all human and earthly, a fallen brother—and at the same time that nobly dressed and nobly dreaming writer at the desk.

That vision of the strengthened and perfected State is protagonist in my story. But as I re-read *The Prince* and thought out the manner of my now abandoned project I came to perceive how that stir and whirl of human thought one calls by way of embodiment the French Revolution has altered absolutely the approach to such a question. Machiavelli, like Plato and Pythagoras and Confucius two hundred odd decades before him, saw only one method by which a thinking man, himself not powerful, might do the work of State-building, and that was by seizing the imagination of a prince. Directly these men turned their thoughts towards realisation their attitudes became—what shall I call it?—secretarial. Machiavelli, it is true, had some little doubts about the particular prince he wanted, whether it was Cæsar Borgia or Giuliano or Lorenzo, but a prince it had to be. Before I saw clearly the differences of our own time I searched my mind for the modern equivalent of a prince. At various times I redrafted a parallel dedication to the Prince of Wales, to the Emperor William, to Mr. Evesham, to a certain newspaper proprietor who was once my schoolfellow at City Merchants', to Mr. J. D. Rockefeller—all of them men in their several ways and circumstances and possibilities princely. Yet in every case my pen bent of its own accord towards irony because—because, although at first I did not realise it, I myself am just as free to be a prince. The appeal was unfair. The old sort of prince, the old little principality, has vanished from the world. The commonweal is one man's absolute estate and responsibility no more. In Machiavelli's time it was indeed, to an extreme degree one man's affair. But the days of the prince who planned and directed and was the source and centre of all power are ended. We are in a condition of affairs infinitely more complex, in which every prince and statesman is something of a servant and every intelligent human being something of a prince. No magnificent, pensive Lorenzos remain any more in this world for secretarial hopes.

In a sense it is wonderful how power has vanished, in a sense wonderful how it has increased. I sit here, an unarmed, discredited man, at a small writing-table in a little defenceless dwelling among the vines, and no human being can stop my pen, except by the deliberate self-immolation of murdering me, nor destroy its fruits except by theft and crime. No king, no council, can seize and torture me; no Church, no nation, silence me. Such powers of ruthless and complete suppression have vanished. But that is not because power has diminished, but because it has increased and become multitudinous, because it has dispersed itself and specialised. It is no longer a negative power we have, but positive; we cannot prevent, but we can do. This age, far beyond all previous ages, is full of powerful men, men who might, if they had the will for it, achieve stupendous things.

The things that might be done to-day! The things, indeed, that are being done! It is the latter that give one so vast a sense of the former.



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When I think of the progress of physical and mechanical science, of medicine and sanitation during the last century, when I measure the increase in general education and average efficiency, the power now available for human service, the merely physical increment, and compare it with anything that has ever been at man's disposal before, and when I think of what a little straggling, incidental, undisciplined, and unco-ordinated minority of inventors, experimenters, educators, writers, and organisers has achieved this development of human possibilities, achieved it in spite of the disregard and aimlessness of the huge majority and the passionate resistance of the active dull, my imagination grows giddy with dazzling intimations of the human splendours the justly organised State may yet attain. I glimpse for a bewildering instant the heights that may be scaled, the splendid enterprises made possible. . . .

But the appeal goes out now in other forms, in a book that catches at thousands of readers for the eye of a prince diffused. It is the old appeal, indeed, for the unification of human effort, the ending of confusions, but instead of the Machiavellian deference to a flattered lord a man cries out of his heart to the unseen fellowship about him. The last written dedication of all those I burnt last night was to no single man, but to the socially constructive passion—in any man. . . .

§ 2. There is, moreover, a second great difference in kind between my world and Machiavelli's. We are discovering women. It is as if they had come across a vast interval since his time, into the very chamber of the statesman.

In Machiavelli's outlook the interest of womanhood was in a region of life almost infinitely remote from his statecraft. They were the vehicle of children, but only Imperial Rome and the new world of to-day have ever had an inkling of the significance that might give them in the State. They did their work, he thought, as the ploughed earth bears its crops. Apart from their function of fertility they gave a humorous twist to life, stimulated worthy men to toil, and wasted the hours of princes. He left the thought of women outside with his other dusty things when he went into his study to write, dismissed them from his mind. But our modern world is burthened with its sense of the immense, now half-articulate, significance of women. They stand now, as it were, close beside the silver candlesticks, speaking as Machiavelli writes, until he stays his pen and turns to discuss his writing with them.

It is this gradual discovery of sex as a thing collectively portentous that I have to mingle with my statecraft if my picture is to be true, which has turned me at length from a treatise to the telling of my own story. In my life I have paralleled very closely the slow realisations that are going on in the world about me. I began life ignoring women; they came to me at first perplexing and dishonouring; only very slowly and very late in my life, and after misadventure, did I gauge the power and beauty of the love of man and woman, and learnt how it must needs frame a justifiable vision of the ordered world. That last love of mine brought me to disaster, because my career had been planned regardless of its possibility and value. But Machiavelli, it seems to me, when he went into his study, left not only the earth of life outside, but its unsuspected soul. . . .



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Like Machiavelli at San Casciano, if I may take this analogy one step farther, I, too, am an exile. Office and leading are closed to me. The political career that promised so much for me is shattered and ended by my own free choice and act.

If Isabel and I had to go through all the events of the past two years again, very probably we should arrive very much at the point at which we are. I do not know. An impulse seized us—how tremendous only those who have known it can tell. Let me be meticulously honest in this and confess, with my soul full of regrets, that I do not know whether or not to call myself penitent. That I am full of regrets is another matter altogether. I grudge very bitterly the heavy price in utility destroyed that social institutions exact from us. We pay, but we complain—that others perhaps some day may not have to pay in this manner. It is idle to pretend we do not suffer intense regret for that other broader, if less vital, half of life we have abandoned to be together with our child. I look under the branches of a stone-pine out from this vine-wreathed veranda; I see wide and far across a purple valley whose sides are terraced and set with houses of pink and ivory, the Gulf of Liguria gleaming sapphire-blue, and cloud-like, baseless mountains hanging in the sky, and I think of lank and coaly steamships heaving on the grey rollers of the English Channel and darkling streets wet with rain; I see again as if I were back there the busy exit from Charing Cross, the cross and the money-changers' offices, the splendid grime of giant London and the crowds going perpetually to and fro, the lights by night and the urgency and eventfulness of that great rain-swept heart of the modern world.

It is difficult to think we have left that—for many years, if not for ever. In thought I walk once more in Palace Yard and hear the clink and clatter of hansoms and the quick, quiet whirr of motors; I go in vivid recent memories through the stir in the lobbies, I sit again at eventful dinners in those old dining-rooms like cellars below the House—dinners that ended with shrill division bells; I think of huge clubs swarming and excited by the bulletins of that electoral battle that was for me the opening opportunity: I see the stencilled names and numbers go up on the green baize, constituency after constituency, amidst murmurs or loud shouting. . . .

It is over now for me and vanished. That opportunity will come no more. We have been too public, so public that a thousand who do not condemn us in their hearts will for the fear of inconvenience pass us with averted faces. We are outcast. Very probably you have heard already some crude inaccurate version of our story and why I did not take office, and have formed your partial judgment on me. And so it is I sit now at my stone table half out of life already, in a warm, large, shadowy leisure, splashed with sunlight and hung with vine-tendrils, with paper before me to distil such wisdom as I can, as Machiavelli in his exile sought to do, from the things I have learnt and felt during the career that has ended now in my divorce.

I climbed high and fast from small beginnings. I had the mind of my party. I do not know where I might not have ended, but for this red blaze that came out of my unguarded nature and closed my career for ever.



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## CHAPTER THE SECOND

### BROMSTEAD AND MY FATHER

§ 1. I DREAMT first of states and cities and political things when I was a little boy in knickerbockers.

When I think of how such things began in my mind there comes back to me the memory of an enormous bleak room, with its ceiling going up to heaven and its floor covered irregularly with patched and defective oilcloth and a dingy mat or so, and a "surround," as they call it, of dark-stained wood. Here and there against the wall are trunks and boxes. There are cupboards on either side of the fireplace, and bookshelves with books above them, and on the wall and rather tattered is a large yellow-varnished geological map of the South of England. Over the mantel is a huge lump of white coral rock and several big fossil bones, and above that hangs the portrait of a brainy gentleman, sliced in half and displaying an interior of intricate detail and much vigour of colouring. It is the floor I think of chiefly; over the oilcloth of which, assumed to be land, spread towns and villages and forts of wooden bricks; there are steep square hills (geologically, volumes of Orr's *Cyclopædia of the Sciences*), and the cracks and spaces of the floor and the bare brown surround were the water channels and open sea of that continent of mine.

I still remember with infinite gratitude the great-uncle to whom I owe my bricks. He must have been one of those rare adults who have not forgotten the chagrins and dreams of childhood. He was a prosperous West of England builder. Including my father, he had three nephews, and for each of them he caused a box of bricks to be made by an out-of-work carpenter—not the insufficient supply of the toy-shop, you understand, but a really adequate quantity of bricks made out of oak and shaped and smoothed, bricks about five inches by two and a half by one, and half-bricks and quarter-bricks to correspond. There were hundreds of them, many hundreds. I could build six towers as high as myself with them, and there seemed quite enough for every engineering project I could undertake. I could build whole towns, with streets of houses and churches and citadels; I could bridge every gap in the oilcloth and make causeways over the crumpled spaces (which I feigned to be morasses); and on a keel of whole bricks it was possible to construct ships to push over the high seas to the remotest port in the room. And a disciplined population, that rose at last by sedulous begging on birthdays and all convenient occasions to well over two hundred, of lead sailors and soldiers, horse, foot, and artillery, inhabited this world.

Justice has never been done to bricks and soldiers by those who write about toys. The praises of the toy theatre have been a common theme for essayists, the planning of the scenes, the painting and cutting out of the caste—penny plain, twopence coloured—the stink and glory of the performance, and the final conflagration. I had such a theatre once, but I never loved it nor hoped for much from it; my bricks and soldiers were my perpetual drama. I recall an incessant variety of interests. There was the mystery and the charm of the complicated buildings one could make, with long passages and steps and windows through which one peeped into their intricacies, and by means of slips of card one could make slanting ways in



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them and send marbles rolling from top to base and thence out into the hold of a waiting ship. Then there were the fortresses and gun emplacements and covered ways in which one's soldiers went. And there was commerce; the shops and markets and store-rooms full of nasturtium seed, thrift seed, lupin beans, and such-like provender from the garden; such stuff one stored in match-boxes and pill-boxes, or packed in sacks of old glove-fingers tied up with thread, and sent off by waggons along the great military road to the beleaguered fortress on the Indian frontier beyond the worn places that were dismal swamps. And there were battles on the way.

That great road is still clear in my memory. I was given, I forgot by what benefactor, certain particularly fierce Red Indians of lead—I have never seen such soldiers since—and for these my father helped me to make tepees of brown paper, and I settled them in a hitherto desolate country under the frowning, nail-studded cliffs of an ancient trunk. Then I conquered them and garrisoned their land. (Alas! they died, no doubt through contact with civilisation—one my mother trod on—and their land became a wilderness again and was ravaged for a time by a clockwork crocodile of vast proportions.) And out towards the coal-scuttle was a region near the impassable thickets of the ragged hearthrug where lived certain china Zulus brandishing spears, and a mountain country of rudely piled bricks concealing the most devious and enchanting caves and several mines of gold and silver paper. Among these rocks a number of survivors from a Noah's Ark made a various, dangerous, albeit frequently invalid and crippled fauna, and I was wont to increase the uncultivated wildness of this region further by trees of privet-twigs from the garden hedge and box from the garden borders. By these territories went my Imperial Road, carrying produce to and fro, bridging gaps in the oilcloth, tunnelling through Encyclopædic hills—one tunnel was three volumes long—defended as occasion required by camps of paper tents or brick block-houses, and ending at last in a magnificently engineered ascent to a fortress on the cliffs commanding the Indian reservation.

My games upon the floor must have spread over several years and developed from small beginnings, incorporating now this suggestion and now that. They stretch, I suppose, from seven to eleven or twelve. I played them intermittently, and no doubt they bulk now in the retrospect far more significantly than they did at the time. I played them in bursts, and then forgot them for long periods; through the spring and summer I was mostly out of doors, and school and classes caught me early. And in the retrospect I see them all not only magnified and transfigured, but foreshortened and confused together. A clockwork railway, I seem to remember, came and went; one or two clockwork boats; toy sailing-ships that, being keeled, would do nothing but lie on their beam ends on the floor; a detestable lot of cavalrymen, undersized and gilt all over, given me by a maiden aunt, and very much what one might expect from an aunt, that I used as Nero used his Christians, to ornament my public buildings, and finally melted some into fratricidal bullets, and therewith blew the rest to flat splashes of lead by means of a brass cannon in the garden.

I find this empire of the floor much more vivid and detailed in my memory now than many of the owners of the skirts and legs and boots that went gingerly across its territories. Occasionally, alas! they stooped to scrub, abolishing in one universal destruction the slow growth of whole



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days of civilised development. I still remember the hatred and disgust of these catastrophes. Like Noah, I was given warnings. Did I disregard them, coarse red hands would descend, plucking garrisons from fortresses and sailors from ships, jumbling them up in their wrong boxes, clumsily, so that their rifles and swords were broken, sweeping the splendid curves of the Imperial Road into heaps of ruins, casting the jungle growth of Zululand into the fire.

"Well, Master Dick," the voice of this cosmic calamity would say, "you ought to have put them away last night. No! I can't wait until you've sailed them all away in ships. I got my work to do, and do it I will."

And in no time all my continents and lands were swirling water and swiping strokes of house-flannel.

That was the worst of my giant visitants, but my mother too, dear lady, was something of a terror to this microcosm. She wore spring-sided boots, a kind of boot now vanished, I believe, from the world, with dull bodies and shiny toes, and a silk dress with flounces that were very destructive to the more hazardous viaducts of the Imperial Road. She was always, I seem to remember, fetching me; fetching me for a meal, fetching me for a walk, or —detestable absurdity!—fetching me for a wash and brush-up, and she never seemed to understand anything whatever of the political systems across which she came to me. Also she forbade all toys on Sundays except the bricks for church-building and the soldiers for church parade or a Scriptural use of the remains of the Noah's Ark mixed up with a wooden Swiss dairy farm. But she really did not know whether a thing was a church or not unless it positively bristled with cannon, and many a Sunday afternoon have I played Chicago (with the fear of God in my heart) under an infidel pretence that it was a new sort of ark rather elaborately done.

Chicago, I must explain, was based upon my father's description of the pig-slaughterings in that city and certain pictures I had seen. You made your beasts—which were all the ark lot really, provisionally conceived as pigs—go up elaborate approaches to a central pen, from which they went down a cardboard slide four at a time and dropped most satisfyingly down a brick shaft and pitter-litter over some steep steps to where a head slaughterman (*né* Noah) strung a cotton loop round their legs and sent them by pin hooks along a wire to a second slaughterman with a chipped foot (formerly Mrs. Noah), who, if I remember rightly, converted them into Army sausage by means of a portion of the inside of an old alarum clock.

My mother did not understand my games, but my father did. He wore bright-coloured socks and carpet slippers when he was indoors—my mother disliked boots in the house—and he would sit himself down on my little chair and survey the microcosm on the floor with admirable understanding and sympathy.

It was he gave me most of my toys, and, I more than suspect, most of my ideas. "Here's some corrugated iron," he would say, "suitable for roofs and fencing," and hand me a lump of that stiff crinkled paper that is used for packing medicine bottles. Or, "Dick, do you see the tiger loose near the Imperial Road?—won't do for your cattle ranch." And I would find a bright new lead tiger like a special creation at large in the world, and demanding a hunting expedition and much elaborate effort to get him safely housed in the city menagerie beside the captured dragon crocodile, tamed now and his key lost and the heart and spring gone out of him.



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And to the various irregular reading of my father I owe the inestimable blessing of never having a boy's book in my boyhood except those of Jules Verne. But my father used to get books for himself and me from the Bromstead Institute, Fenimore Cooper and Mayne Reid and illustrated histories; one of the Russo-Turkish War and one of Napier's expedition to Abyssinia I read from end to end; Stanley and Livingstone, lives of Wellington, Napoleon, and Garibaldi, and back volumes of *Punch*, from which I derived conceptions of foreign and domestic politics it has taken years of adult reflection to correct. And at home permanently we had Wood's *Natural History*, a brand-new illustrated Green's *History of the English People*, Irving's *Companions of Columbus*, a great number of unbound parts of some geographical work, *A Voyage round the World* I think it was called, with pictures of foreign places, and Clarke's *New Testament*, with a map of Palestine, and a variety of other informing books bought at sales. There was a Sowerby's *Botany* also, with thousands of carefully tinted pictures of British plants, and one or two other important works in the sitting-room. I was allowed to turn these over and even lie on the floor with them on Sundays and other occasions of exceptional cleanliness.

And in the attic I found one day a very old, forgotten map after the fashion of a bird's-eye view, representing the Crimea, that fascinated me and kept me for hours navigating its waters with a pin.

§ 2. My father was a lank-limbed man, in easy, shabby tweed clothes, and with his hands in his trouser pockets. He was a science teacher, taking a number of classes at the Bromstead Institute in Kent under the old Science and Art Department and "visiting" various schools; and our resources were eked out by my mother's income of nearly a hundred pounds a year and by his inheritance of a terrace of three palatial but structurally unsound stucco houses near Bromstead Station.

They were big, clumsy residences in the earliest Victorian style, interminably high, and with deep, damp basements and downstairs coal-cellars and kitchens that suggested an architect vindictively devoted to the discomfort of the servant class. If so he had overreached himself and defeated his end, for no servant would stay in them unless for exceptional wages or exceptional tolerance of inefficiency or exceptional freedom in repartee. Every story in the house was from twelve to fifteen feet high (which would have been cool and pleasant in a hot climate), and the stairs went steeply up to end at last in attics too inaccessible for occupation. The ceilings had vast plaster cornices of classical design, fragments of which would sometimes fall unexpectedly, and the wall-papers were bold and gigantic in pattern and much variegated by damp and ill-mended rents.

As my father was quite unable to let more than one of these houses at a time, and that for the most part to eccentric and undesirable tenants, he thought it politic to live in one of the two others and devote the rent he received from the let one, when it was let, to the incessant necessary repairing of all three. He also did some of the repairing himself; smoking a bull-dog pipe the while, which my mother would not allow him to do in the house, and he cultivated vegetables in a sketchy, unpunctual, and not always successful manner, in the unoccupied garden. The three houses faced north, and the back of the one we occupied was covered by a grape-vine that yielded, I remember, small green grapes for pies in the



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spring and imperfectly ripe black grapes in favourable autumns for the purposes of dessert. That grape-vine played an important part in my life, for my father broke his neck while he was pruning it when I was thirteen.

My father was what is called a man of ideas, but they were not always good ideas. My grandfather had been a private schoolmaster and one of the founders of the College of Preceptors, and my father had assisted him in his school until increasing competition and diminishing attendances had made it evident that the days of small private schools kept by unqualified persons were numbered. Thereupon my father had roused himself and had qualified as a science teacher under the Science and Art Department, which in those days had charge of the scientific and artistic education of the mass of the English population, and had thrown himself into science teaching and the earning of Government grants, therefore, with great if transitory zeal and success.

I do not remember anything of my father's earlier and more energetic time. I was the child of my parents' middle years; they married when my father was thirty-five and my mother past forty, and I saw only the last, decadent phase of his educational career.

The Science and Art Department has vanished altogether from the world, and people are forgetting it now with the utmost readiness and generosity. Part of its substance and staff and spirit survive, more or less completely digested into the Board of Education. . . . The world does move on, even in its government. It is wonderful how many of the clumsy and limited governing bodies of my youth and early manhood have given place now to more scientific and efficient machinery. When I was a boy, Bromstead, which is now a Borough, was ruled by a strange body called a Local Board—it was the Age of Boards—and I still remember indistinctly my father rejoicing at the breakfast table over the liberation of London from the corrupt and devastating control of a Metropolitan Board of Works. Then there were also School Boards; I was already practically in politics before the London School Board was absorbed by the spreading tentacles of the London County Council.

It gives a measure of the newness of our modern ideas of the State to remember that the very beginnings of public education lie within my father's lifetime, and that many most intelligent and patriotic people were shocked beyond measure at the State doing anything of the sort. When he was born totally illiterate people who could neither read a book nor write more than perhaps a clumsy signature were to be found everywhere in England and great masses of the population were getting no instruction at all. Only a few schools flourished upon the patronage of exceptional parents. All over the country the old endowed grammar-schools were to be found sinking and dwindling; many of them had closed altogether. In the new great centres of population multitudes of children were sweated in the factories, darkly ignorant and wretched, and the under-equipped and under-staffed National and British schools, supported by voluntary contributions and sectarian rivalries, made an ineffectual fight against this festering darkness. It was a condition of affairs clamouring for remedies, but there was an immense amount of indifference and prejudice to be overcome before any remedies were possible. Perhaps some day some industrious and lucid historian will disentangle all the muddle of impulses



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and antagonisms, the commercialism, utilitarianism, obstinate conservatism, humanitarian enthusiasm, out of which our present educational organisation arose. I have long since come to believe it necessary that all new social institutions should be born in confusion and that at first they should present chiefly crude and ridiculous aspects. The distrust of Government in the Victorian days was far too great and the general intelligence far too low to permit the State to go about the new business it was taking up in a business-like way, to train teachers, build and equip schools, endow pedagogic research, and provide properly written school-books. These things, it was felt, *must* be provided by individual and local effort, and since it was manifest that it was individual and local effort that were in default, it was reluctantly agreed to stimulate them by money payments. The State set up a machinery of examination both in science and art and for the elementary schools, and payments, known technically as grants, were made in accordance with the examination results attained, to such schools as Providence might see fit to send into the world. In this way it was felt the demand would be established that would, according to the beliefs of that time, inevitably ensure the supply. An industry of " grant-earning " was created, and this would give education as a necessary by-product.

In the end this belief was found to need qualification, but grant-earning was still in full activity when I was a small boy. So far as the Science and Art Department and my father are concerned, the task of examination was entrusted to eminent scientific men, for the most part quite unaccustomed to such teaching as these classes had to undertake. You see, if they also were teaching similar classes to those they examined, it was feared that injustice might be done. Year after year these eminent persons set questions and employed subordinates to read and mark the increasing thousands of answers that ensued, and having, no doubt, the national ideal of fairness well developed in their minds, they were careful each year to re-read the preceding papers before composing the current one in order to see what it was usual to ask. As a result of this, in the course of a few years the recurrence and permutation of questions became almost calculable, and since the practical object of the teaching was to teach people not science but how to write answers to these questions, the industry of grant-earning assumed a form easily distinguished from any kind of genuine education whatever.

Other remarkable compromises had also to be made with the spirit of the age. The unfortunate conflict between Religion and Science prevalent at this time was mitigated, if I remember rightly, by making graduates in arts and priests in the Established Church science teachers *ex officio*, and leaving local and private enterprise to provide schools, diagrams, books, material, according to the conceptions of efficiency prevalent in the district. Private enterprise made a particularly good thing of the books. A number of competing firms of publishers sprang into existence specialising in Science and Art Department work; they set themselves to produce text-books that should supply exactly the quantity and quality of knowledge necessary for every stage of each of five-and-twenty subjects into which desirable science was divided, and copies and models and instructions that should give precisely the method and gestures esteemed as proficiency in art. Every section of each book was written in the idiom found to be most satisfactory to the examiners, and test questions extracted from papers



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set in former years were appended to every chapter. By means of these last the teacher was able to train his class to the very highest level of grant-earning efficiency, and very naturally he cast all other methods of exposition aside. First he posed his pupils with questions, and then dictated model replies.

That was my father's method of instruction. I attended his classes as an elementary grant-earner from the age of ten until his death, and it is so I remember him, sitting on the edge of a table, smothering a yawn occasionally and giving out the infallible formulæ to the industriously scribbling class sitting in rows of desks before him. Occasionally he would slide to his feet and go to a blackboard on an easel and draw on that very slowly and deliberately in coloured chalks a diagram for the class to copy in coloured pencils, and sometimes he would display a specimen or arrange an experiment for them to see. The room in the Institute in which he taught was equipped with a certain amount of apparatus prescribed as necessary for subject this and subject that by the Science and Art Department, and this my father would supplement with maps and diagrams and drawings of his own.

But he never really did experiments, except that in the class in systematic botany he sometimes made us tease common flowers to pieces. He did not do experiments if he could possibly help it because in the first place they used up time and gas for the Bunsen burner and good material in a ruinous fashion, and in the second they were, in his rather careless and sketchy hands, apt to endanger the apparatus of the Institute, and even the lives of his students. Then thirdly, real experiments involved washing up. And moreover they always turned out wrong, and sometimes misled the too observant learner very seriously and opened demoralising controversies. Quite early in life I acquired an almost ineradicable sense of the unscientific perversity of Nature and the impassable gulf that is fixed between systematic science and elusive fact. I knew, for example, that in science, whether it be Subject XII. Organic Chemistry, or Subject XVII. Animal Physiology, when you blow into a glass of lime-water it instantly becomes cloudy and if you continue to blow it clears again, whereas in truth you may blow into the stuff from the lime-water bottle until you are crimson in the face and painful under the ears and it never becomes cloudy at all. And I knew, too, that in science if you put potassium chlorate into a retort and heat it over a Bunsen burner oxygen is disengaged, and may be collected over water, whereas in real life if you do anything of the sort the vessel cracks with a loud report, the potassium chlorate descends sizzling upon the flame, the experimenter says "Oh! damn!" with astonishing heartiness and distinctness, and a lady student in the back seats gets up and leaves the room.

Science is the organised conquest of Nature, and I can quite understand that ancient libertine refusing to co-operate in her own undoing. And I can quite understand, too, my father's preference for what he called illustrative experiments, which was simply an arrangement of the apparatus in front of the class with nothing whatever by way of material, and the Bunsen burner clean and cool, and then a slow, luminous description of just what you did put in it when you were so ill-advised as to carry the affair beyond illustration, and just exactly what ought anyhow to happen when you did. He had considerable powers of vivid expression, so that in this way he could make us see all he described. The class, freed from any unplea-



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sant nervous tension, could draw this still life without flinching, and if any part was too difficult to draw, then my father would produce a simplified version on the blackboard to be copied instead. And he would also write on the blackboard any exceptionally difficult but grant-earning words, such as "empyreumatic" or "botryoidal."

Some words in constant use he rarely explained. I remember once sticking up my hand and asking him in that full flow of description, "Please, sir, what is flocculent?"

"The precipitate is."

"Yes, sir, but what does it mean?"

"Oh! flocculent!" said my father, "flocculent! Why——" he extended his hand and arm and twiddled his fingers for a second in the air. "Like that," he said.

I thought the explanation sufficient, but he paused for a moment after giving it. "As in a flock bed, you know," he added, and resumed his discourse.

§ 3. My father, I am afraid, carried a natural incompetence in practical affairs to an exceptionally high level. He combined practical incompetence, practical enterprise, and a thoroughly sanguine temperament in a manner that I have never seen paralleled in any human being. He was always trying to do new things in the briskest manner, under the suggestion of books or papers or his own spontaneous imagination, and as he had never been trained to do anything whatever in his life properly his futilities were extensive and thorough. At one time he nearly gave up his classes for intensive culture, so enamoured was he of its possibilities. The peculiar pungency of the manure he got, in pursuit of a chemical theory of his own, has scarred my olfactory memories for a lifetime. The intensive culture phase is very clear in my memory; it came near the end of his career, and when I was between eleven and twelve. I was mobilised to gather caterpillars on several occasions, and assisted in nocturnal raids upon the slugs by lantern-light that wrecked my preparation work for school next day. My father dug up both lawns, and trenched and manured in spasms of immense vigour alternating with periods of paralysing distaste for the garden. And for weeks he talked about eight hundred pounds an acre at every meal.

A garden, even when it is not exasperated by intensive methods, is a thing as exacting as a baby. Its moods have to be watched; it does not wait upon the cultivator's convenience, but has times of its own. Intensive culture greatly increases this disposition to trouble mankind; it makes a garden touchy and hysterical, a drugged and demoralised and over-irritated garden. My father got at cross-purposes with our two patches at an early stage. Everything grew wrong from first to last, and if my father's manures intensified nothing else they certainly intensified the Primordial Curse. The peas were eaten in the night before they were three inches high, the beans bore nothing but blight, the only apparent result of a spraying of the potatoes was to develop a penchant in the cat for being ill indoors, the cucumber-frames were damaged by the catapulting of boys going down the lane at the back, and all our cucumbers were mysteriously embittered. That lane with its occasional passers-by did much to wreck the intensive scheme, because my father always stopped work and went indoors if any



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one watched him. His special manure was apt to arouse a troublesome spirit of inquiry in hardy natures.

In digging his rows and shaping his patches he neglected the guiding string and trusted to his eye altogether too much, and the consequent obliquity and the various wind-breaks and scarecrows he erected, and particularly an irrigation contrivance he began and never finished, by which everything was to be watered at once by means of pieces of gutter from the roof and outhouses of Number 2, and a large and particularly obstinate clump of elder-bushes in the abolished hedge that he had failed to destroy entirely either by axe or fire, combined to give the gardens under intensive culture a singularly desolate and disorderly appearance. He took steps towards the diversion of our house drain, under the influence of the Sewage Utilisation Society; but happily he stopped in time. He hardly completed any of the operations he began; something else became more urgent, or simply he tired; a considerable area of the Number 2 territory was never even dug up.

In the end the affair irritated him beyond endurance. Never was a man less horticulturally-minded. The clamour of these vegetables he had launched into the world, for his service and assistance, wore out his patience. He would walk into the garden the happiest of men after a day or so of disregard, talking to me of history, perhaps, or social organisation, or summarising some book he had read. He talked to me of anything that interested him, regardless of my limitations. Then he would begin to note the growth of the weeds. "This won't do," he would say, and pull up a handful.

More weeding would follow, and the talk would become fragmentary. His hands would become earthy, his nails black, weeds would snap off in his careless grip, leaving the roots behind. The world would darken. He would look at his fingers with disgusted astonishment. "*Curse* these weeds!" he would say from his heart. His discourse was at an end. . . .

I have memories, too, of his sudden, unexpected charges into the tranquillity of the house, his hands and clothes intensively enriched. He would come in like a whirlwind. "This damned stuff all over me and the Agricultural Chemistry Class at six! Bah! *Aaaaaah!*"

My mother would never learn not to attempt to break him of swearing on such occasions. She would remain standing a little stiffly in the scullery, refusing to assist him to the adjectival towel he sought.

"If you say such things——"

He would dance with rage and hurl the soap about. "The towel!" he would cry, flicking suds from his fingers in every direction; "the towel! I'll let the blithering class slide if you don't give me the towel! I'll give up everything, I tell you—everything!" . . .

At last with the failure of the lettuces came the breaking-point. I was in the little arbour learning Latin irregular verbs when it happened. I can see him still, his peculiar tenor voice still echoes in my brain, shouting his opinion of intensive culture for the startled angels and all the world to hear and slashing away at that abominable mockery of a crop with a hoe. We had tied them up with bast only a week or so before, and now half were rotten and half had shot up into tall, slender growths. He had the hoe in both hands and slogged. Great wipes he made, and at each stroke he said, "Take that!"



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The air was thick with flying fragments of abortive salad. It was a fantastic massacre. It was the French Revolution of that cold tyranny, the vindictive overthrow of the pampered vegetable aristocrats. After he had assuaged his passion upon them, he turned for other prey; he kicked holes in two of our noblest marrows, flicked off the heads of half a row of artichokes, and shied the hoe with a splendid smash into the cucumber frame. Something of the awe of that moment returns to me as I write of it.

"Well, my boy," he said, approaching with an expression of beneficent happiness, "I've done with gardening. Let's go for a walk like reasonable beings. I've had enough of this"—his face was convulsed for an instant with bitter resentment—"pandering to cabbages."

§ 4. That afternoon's walk sticks in my memory for many reasons. One is that we went farther than I had ever been before—far beyond Keston and nearly to Sevenoaks, coming back by train from Dunton Green—and the other is that my father as he went along talked about himself, not so much to me as to himself, and about life and what he had done with it. He monologued so that at times he produced an effect of weird world-forgetfulness. I listened puzzled, and at that time not understanding many things that afterwards became plain to me. It is only in recent years that I have discovered the pathos of that monologue; how friendless my father was and uncompanioned in his thoughts and feelings, and what a hunger he may have felt for the sympathy of the undeveloped youngster who trotted by his side.

"I'm no gardener," he said, "I'm no anything. Why the devil did I start gardening?

"I suppose man was created to mind a garden. . . . But the Fall let us out of that! What was *I* created for? God! what was *I* created for? . . .

"Slaves to matter! Minding inanimate things! It doesn't suit me, you know. I've got no hands and no patience. I've mucked about with life. Mucked about with life." He suddenly addressed himself to me, and for an instant I started like an eavesdropper discovered. "Whatever you do, Boy, whatever you do, make a Plan. Make a good Plan and stick to it. Find out what life is about—*I* never have—and set yourself to do—whatever you ought to do. I admit it's a puzzle. . . .

"Those damned houses have been the curse of my life. Stucco white elephants! Beastly cracked stucco with stains of green—black and green. Conferva and soot. . . . Property, they are! . . . Beware of Things, Dick, beware of Things! Before you know where you are you are waiting on them and minding them. They'll eat your life up. Eat up your hours and your blood and energy! When those houses came to me I ought to have sold them—or fled the country. I ought to have cleared out. Sarcophagi—eaters of men! Oh! the hours and days of work, the nights of anxiety those vile houses have cost me! The painting! It worked up my arms; it got all over me! I stank of it. It made me ill. It isn't living—it's minding. . . .

"Property's the curse of life. Property! Ugh! Look at this country all cut up into silly little parallelograms, look at all those villas we passed just now and those potato-patches and that tarred shanty and the hedge! Somebody's minding every bit of it like a dog tied to a cart's



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tail. Patching it and bothering about it. Bothering! Yapping at every passer-by. Look at that notice-board! One rotten worried little beast wants to keep us other rotten little beasts off *his* patch—God knows why! Look at the weeds in it. Look at the mended fence! . . . There's no property worth having, Dick, but money. That's only good to spend. All these things. Human souls buried under a cartload of blithering rubbish. . . .

"I'm not a fool, Dick. I have qualities, imagination, a sort of go. I ought to have made a better thing of life.

"I'm sure I could have done things. Only the old people pulled my leg. They started me wrong. They never started me at all. I only began to find out what life was like when I was nearly forty.

"If I'd gone to a university; if I'd had any sort of sound training; if I hadn't slipped into the haphazard places that came easiest . . .

"Nobody warned me. Nobody. It isn't a world we live in, Dick; it's a cascade of accidents; it's a chaos exasperated by policemen! *You* be warned in time, Dick. You stick to a plan. Don't wait for any one to show you the way. Nobody will. There isn't a way till you make one. Get education, get a good education. Fight your way to the top. It's your only chance. I've watched you. You'll do no good at digging and property-minding. There isn't a neighbour in Bromstead won't be able to skin you at such-like games. You and I are the brainy, unstable kind, top-side or nothing. And if ever those blithering houses come to you—don't have 'em. Give them away! Dynamite 'em—and off! *Live*, Dick! I'll get rid of them for you if I can, Dick, but remember what I say. . . ."

So it was my father discoursed, if not in those particular words, yet exactly in that manner, as he slouched along the southward road, with resentful eyes becoming less resentful as he talked, and flinging out clumsy illustrative motions at the outskirts of Bromstead as we passed along them. That afternoon he hated Bromstead, from its foot-tiring pebbles up. He had no illusions about Bromstead or himself. I have the clearest impression of him in his garden-stained tweeds, with a deer-stalker hat on the back of his head, and presently a pipe, sometimes between his teeth and sometimes in his gesticulating hand, as he became diverted by his talk from his original exasperation. . . .

This particular afternoon is no doubt mixed up in my memory with many other afternoons; all sorts of things my father said and did at different times have got themselves referred to it; it filled me at the time with a great, unprecedented sense of fellowship, and it has become the symbol now for all our intercourse together. If I didn't understand the things he said, I did the mood he was in. He gave me two very broad ideas in that talk and the talks I have mingled with it; he gave them to me very clearly; and they have remained fundamental in my mind: one a sense of the extraordinary confusion and waste and planlessness of the human life that went on all about us; and the other of a great ideal of order and economy which he called variously Science and Civilisation, and which, though I do not remember that he ever used that word, I suppose many people nowadays would identify with Socialism—as the Fabians expound it.

He was not very definite about this Science, you must understand, but he seemed always to be waving his hand towards it—just as his contemporary Tennyson seems always to be doing; he belonged to his



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age, and mostly his talk was destructive of the limited beliefs of his time. He led me to infer rather than actually told me that this Science was coming, a spirit of light and order, to the rescue of a world groaning and travailing in muddle for the want of it. . . .

§ 5. When I think of Bromstead nowadays I find it inseparably bound up with the disorders of my father's gardening and the odd patchings and paintings that disfigured his houses. It was all of a piece with that.

Let me try and give something of the quality of Bromstead and something of its history. It is the quality and history of a thousand places round and about London, and round and about the other great centres of population in the world. Indeed, it is in a measure the quality of the whole of this modern world from which we who have the statesman's passion struggle to evolve and dream still of evolving order.

First, then, you must think of Bromstead a hundred and fifty years ago as a narrow, irregular little street of thatched houses strung out on the London and Dover Road, a little mellow sample unit of a social order that had a kind of completeness, at its level, of its own. At that time its population numbered a little under two thousand people, mostly engaged in agricultural work or in trades serving agriculture. There was a blacksmith, a saddler, a chemist, a doctor, a barber, a linen-draper (who brewed his own beer), a veterinary surgeon, a hardware shop, and two capacious inns. Round and about it were a number of pleasant gentlemen's seats, whose owners went frequently to London Town in their coaches along the very tolerable high road. The church was big enough to hold the whole population, were people minded to go to church—and, indeed, a large proportion did go; and all who married were married in it, and everybody, to begin with, was christened at its font and buried at last in its yew-shaded graveyard. Everybody knew everybody in the place. It was, in fact, a definite place and a real human community in those days. There was a pleasant old market-house in the middle of the town, with a weekly market and an annual fair, at which much cheerful merry-making and homely intoxication occurred; there was a pack of hounds which hunted within five miles of London Bridge, and the local gentry would occasionally enliven the place with valiant cricket matches for a hundred guineas a side, to the vast excitement of the entire population. It was very much the same sort of place that it had been for three or four centuries. A Bromstead Rip Van Winkle from 1550 returning in 1750 would have found most of the old houses still as he had known them, the same trades a little improved, and differentiated one from the other, the same roads rather more carefully tended, the inns not very much altered, the ancient, familiar market-house. The occasional wheeled traffic would have struck him as the most remarkable difference, next, perhaps, to the swaggering painted stone monuments instead of brasses and the Protestant severity of the Communion-table in the parish church—both, from the material point of view, very little things. A Rip Van Winkle from 1350, again, would have noticed scarcely greater changes: fewer clergy, more people, and particularly more people of the middling sort; the glass in the windows of many of the houses, the stylish chimneys springing up everywhere would have impressed him, and such-like details. The place would have had the same boundaries, the same broad essential features, would have been still



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itself in the way that a man is still himself after he has "filled out" a little and grown a longer beard and changed his clothes.

But after 1750 something got hold of the world, something that was destined to alter the scale of every human affair.

That something was machinery and a vague energetic disposition to improve material things. In another part of England ingenious people were beginning to use coal in smelting iron and were producing metal in abundance and metal castings in sizes that had hitherto been unattainable. Without warning or preparation, increment involving countless possibilities of further increment was coming to the strength of horses and men. "Power," all unsuspected, was flowing like a drug into the veins of the social body.

Nobody seems to have perceived this coming of power, and nobody had calculated its probable consequences. Suddenly, almost inadvertently, people found themselves doing things that would have amazed their ancestors. They began to construct wheeled vehicles much more easily and cheaply than they had ever done before, to make up roads and move things about that had formerly been esteemed too heavy for locomotion, to join woodwork with iron nails instead of wooden pegs, to achieve all sorts of mechanical possibilities, to trade more freely and manufacture on a larger scale, to send goods abroad in a wholesale and systematic way, to bring back commodities from overseas, not simply spices and fine commodities, but goods in bulk. The new influence spread to agriculture, iron appliances replaced wooden, breeding of stock became systematic, paper-making and printing increased and cheapened. Roofs of slate and tile appeared amidst and presently prevailed over the original Bromstead thatch, the huge space of common to the south was extensively enclosed, and what had been an ill-defined horse-track to Dover, only passable by adventurous coaches in dry weather, became the Dover Road, and was presently the route first of one and then of several daily coaches. The High Street was discovered to be too tortuous for these awakening energies, and a new road cut off its worst contortions. Residential villas appeared, occupied by retired tradesmen and widows who esteemed the place healthy, and by others of a strange new, unoccupied class of people who had money invested in joint-stock enterprises. First one and then several boys' boarding-schools came, drawing their pupils from London—my grandfather's was one of these. London, twelve miles to the north-west, was making itself felt more and more.

But this was only the beginning of the growth period, the first trickle of the coming flood of mechanical power. Away in the north they were casting iron in bigger and bigger forms, working their way to the production of steel on a large scale, applying power in factories. Bromstead had almost doubled in size again long before the railway came; there was hardly any thatch left in the High Street, but instead were houses with handsome brass-knockered front doors and several windows, and shops with shop-fronts all of square glass panes, and the place was lighted publicly now by oil lamps—previously only one flickering lamp outside each of the coaching inns had broken the nocturnal darkness. And there was talk—it long remained talk—of gas. The gasworks came in 1834, and about that date my father's three houses must have been built convenient for the London Road. They mark nearly the beginning of



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the real suburban quality; they were let at first to City people still engaged in business.

And then hard on the gasworks had come the railway and cheap coal; there was a wild outbreak of brickfields upon the clay-lands to the east, and the Great Growth had begun in earnest. The agricultural placidities that had formerly come to the very borders of the High Street were broken up north, west, and south by new roads. This enterprising person and then that began to "run up" houses, irrespective of every other enterprising person who was doing the same thing. A Local Board came into existence, and with much hesitation and penny-wise economy inaugurated drainage works. Rates became a common topic, a fact of accumulating importance. Several chapels of zinc and iron appeared, and also a white new church in commercial Gothic upon the common, and another of red brick in the residential district out beyond the brickfields towards Chessington.

The population doubled again and doubled again, and became particularly teeming in the prolific "working-class" district about the deep-rutted, muddy, coal-blackened roads between the gasworks, Blodgett's laundries, and the railway goods-yard. Weekly properties—that is to say, small houses built by small property-owners and let by the week, sprang up also in the Cage Fields, and presently extended right up the London Road. A single National school in an inconvenient situation set itself inadequately to collect subscriptions and teach the swarming, sniffing, grimy offspring of this dingy new population to read. The villages of Beckington, which used to be three miles to the west, and Blamley, four miles to the east of Bromstead, were experiencing similar distensions and proliferations and grew out to meet us. All effect of locality or community had gone from these places long before I was born; hardly any one knew any one; there was no general meeting-place any more, the old fairs were just common nuisances haunted by gypsies, van showmen, cheap jacks, and London roughs, the churches were incapable of a quarter of the population. One or two local papers of shameless veniality reported the proceedings of the local Bench and the Local Board, compelled tradesmen who were interested in these affairs to advertise, used the epithet "Bromstedian" as one expressing peculiar virtues, and so maintained in the general mind a weak tradition of some local quality that embraced us all. Then the parish graveyard filled up and became a scandal, and an ambitious area with an air of appetite was walled in by a Bromstead Cemetery Company and planted with suitably high-minded and sorrowful varieties of conifer. A stone-mason took one of the earlier villas with a front garden at the end of the High Street and displayed a supply of urns on pillars and headstones and crosses in stone, marble, and granite that would have sufficed to commemorate in elaborate detail the entire population of Bromstead as one found it in 1750.

The cemetery was made when I was a little boy of five or six; I was in the full tide of building and growth from the first; the second railway, with its station at Bromstead North, and the drainage followed when I was ten or eleven, and all my childish memories are of digging and wheeling, of woods invaded by building, roads gashed open and littered with iron pipes amidst a fearful smell of gas, of men peeped at and seen toiling away deep down in excavations, of hedges broken down and replaced by planks, of wheelbarrows and builders' sheds, of rivulets overtaken and swallowed up by drain-pipes. Big trees, and especially elms, cleared of undergrowth



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and left standing amid such things, acquire a peculiar tattered dinginess rather in the quality of needy widow women who have seen happier days.

The Ravensbrook of my earlier memories was a beautiful stream. It came into my world out of a mysterious Beyond I never penetrated, out of a garden, splashing brightly down a weir which had once been the weir of a mill. (Above the weir, and inaccessible, there were bulrushes growing in splendid clumps, and beyond that, pampas grass, yellow and crimson spikes of hollyhock and blue suggestions of Wonderland.) From the pool at the foot of this initial cascade it flowed in a leisurely fashion beside a foot-path—there were two pretty thatched cottages on the left, and here were ducks, and there were willows on the right—and so came to where great trees grew on high banks on either hand and bowed closer and at last met overhead. This part was difficult to reach because of an old fence, but a little boy might glimpse that long cavern of greenery by wading. Either I have actually seen kingfishers there or my father has described them so accurately to me that he inserted them into my memory. I remember them there anyhow. Most of that overhung part I never penetrated at all, but followed the field path with my mother and met the stream again where beyond there were flat meadows, Roper's Meadows. The Ravens-brook went meandering across the middle of these, now between steep banks and now with wide shallows at the bends where the cattle waded and drank. Yellow and purple loosestrife and ordinary rushes grew in clumps along the bank, and now and then a willow. On rare occasions of rapture one might see a rat cleaning his whiskers at the water's edge. The deep places were rich with tangled weeds, and in them fishes lurked—to me they were big fishes; water-boatmen and water-beetles traversed the calm surface of these still deeps; in one pool were yellow lilies and water-soldiers, and in the shoaly places hovering fleets of small fry basked in the sunshine—to vanish in a flash at one's shadow. In one place, too, were rapids, where the stream woke with a start from a dreamless brooding into foaming panic and battled and hastened. Well do I remember that half-mile of rivulet; all other rivers and cascades have their reference to it for me. And after I was eleven and before we left Bromstead all the delight and beauty of it was destroyed.

The volume of its water decreased abruptly—I suppose the new drainage works that linked us up with Beckington and made me first acquainted with the geological quality of the London clay had to do with that—until only a weak, uncleansing trickle remained. That at first did not strike me as a misfortune. An adventurous small boy might walk dryshod in places hitherto inaccessible. But hard upon that came the pegs, the planks and carts and devastation. Roper's Meadows, being no longer in fear of floods, were now to be slashed out into parallelograms of untidy road and built upon with rows of working-class cottages. The roads came—horribly the houses followed. They seemed to arise in the night. People moved into them as soon as the roofs were on, mostly workmen and their young wives, and already in a year some of these raw houses stood empty again from defaulting tenants, with windows broken and woodwork warping and rotting. The Ravensbrook became a dump for old iron, rusty cans, abandoned boots, and the like, and was a river only when unusual rains filled it for a day or so with an inky flood of surface-water. . . .

That, indeed, was my most striking perception in the growth of Brom-



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stead. The Ravensbrook had been important to my imaginative life; that way had always been my first choice in all my walks with my mother, and its rapid swamping by the new urban growth made it indicative of all the other things that had happened just before my time or were still, at a less dramatic pace, happening. I realised that building was the enemy. I began to understand why in every direction out of Bromstead one walked past scaffold-poles into litter, why fragments of broken brick and cinder mingled in every path, and the significance of the universal notice-boards, either white and new or a year old and torn and battered, promising sites, proferring houses to be sold or let, abusing and intimidating passers-by for fancied trespass, and protecting rights of way.

It is difficult to disentangle now what I understood at this time and what I have since come to understand, but it seems to me that even in those childish days I was acutely aware of an invading and growing disorder. The serene rhythms of the old-established agriculture, I see now, were everywhere being replaced by cultivation under notice and snatch crops; hedges ceased to be repaired, and were replaced by cheap iron railings or chunks of corrugated iron; more and more hoardings sprang up, and contributed more and more to the nomad tribes of filthy paper scraps that flew before the wind and overspread the country. The outskirts of Bromstead were a maze of exploitation roads that led nowhere, that ended in tarred fences studded with nails (I don't remember barbed wire in those days; I think the *Zeitgeist* did not produce that until later), and in trespass boards that used vehement language. Broken glass, tin cans, and ashes and paper abounded. Cheap glass, cheap tin, abundant fuel, and a free, untaxed Press had rushed upon a world quite unprepared to dispose of these blessings when the fulness of enjoyment was past.

I suppose one might have persuaded oneself that all this was but the replacement of an ancient tranquillity, or at least an ancient balance, by a new order. Only to my eyes, quickened by my father's intimations, it was manifestly no order at all. It was a multitude of inco-ordinated fresh starts, each more sweeping and destructive than the last, and none of them ever really worked out to a ripe and satisfactory completion. Each left a legacy of products, houses, humanity, or what not, in its wake. It was a sort of progress that had bolted; it was change out of hand and going at an unprecedented pace nowhere in particular.

No, the Victorian epoch was not the dawn of a new era; it was a hasty trial experiment, a gigantic experiment of the most slovenly and wasteful kind. I suppose it was necessary; I suppose all things are necessary. I suppose that before men will discipline themselves to learn and plan they must first see in a hundred convincing forms the folly and muddle that come from headlong, aimless, and haphazard methods. The nineteenth century was an age of demonstrations, some of them very impressive demonstrations, of the powers that have come to mankind, but of permanent achievement what will our descendants cherish? It is hard to estimate what grains of precious metal may not be found in a mud torrent of human production on so large a scale, but will any one, a hundred years from now, consent to live in the houses the Victorians built, travel by their roads or railways, value the furnishings they made to live among, or esteem, except for curious or historical reasons, their prevalent art and the clipped and limited literature that satisfied their souls?



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That age which bore me was, indeed, a world full of restricted and undisciplined people overtaken by power, by possessions and great new freedoms, and unable to make any civilised use of them whatever, stricken now by this idea and now by that, tempted first by one possession and then another to ill-considered attempts; it was my father's exploitation of his villa gardens on the wholesale level. The whole of Bromstead as I remember it, and as I saw it last—it is a year ago now—is a dull, useless boiling up of human activities, an immense clustering of futilities. It is as unfinished as ever; the builders' roads still run out and end in mid-field in their old fashion; the various enterprises jumble in the same hopeless contradiction, if anything intensified. Pretentious villas jostle slums, and public-house and tin tabernacle glower at one another across the cat-haunted lot that intervenes. Roper's Meadows are now quite frankly a slum, back doors and sculleries gape towards the railway, their yards are hung with tattered washing unashamed; and there seem to be more boards by the railway every time I pass, advertising pills and pickles, tonics and condiments, and such-like solicitudes of a people with no natural health nor appetite left in them. . . .

Well, we have to do better. Failure is not failure nor waste wasted if it sweeps away illusion and lights the road to a plan.

§ 6. Chaotic indiscipline, ill-adjusted effort, spasmodic aims, these give the quality of all my Bromstead memories. The crowning one of them all rises to desolating tragedy. I remember now the wan spring sunshine of that Sunday morning, the stiff feeling of best clothes and aggressive cleanliness and formality, when I and my mother returned from church to find my father dead. He had been pruning the grape-vine. He had never had a ladder long enough to reach the sill of the third-floor windows—at house-painting times he had borrowed one from the plumber who mixed his paint—and he had in his own happy-go-lucky way contrived a combination of the garden fruit ladder with a battered kitchen table that served all sorts of odd purposes in an outhouse. He had stayed up this arrangement by means of the garden roller, and the roller had at the critical moment—rolled. He was lying close by the garden door with his head queerly bent back against a broken and twisted rain-water pipe, an expression of pacific contentment on his face, a bamboo curtain-rod, with a table knife tied to the end of it, still gripped in his hand. We had been rapping for some time at the front door, unable to make him hear, and then we came round by the door in the side trellis into the garden and so discovered him.

"Arthur!" I remember my mother crying, with the strangest break in her voice, "what are you doing there? Arthur! And—*Sunday!*"

I was coming behind her, musing remotely, when the quality of her voice roused me. She stood as if she could not go near him. He had always puzzled her so, he and his ways, and this seemed only another enigma. Then the truth dawned on her, she shrieked as if afraid of him, ran a dozen steps back towards the trellis door, and stopped and clasped her ineffectual gloved hands, leaving me staring blankly, too astonished for feeling, at the carelessly flung limbs.

The same idea came to me also. I ran to her. "Mother!" I cried, pale to the depths of my spirit, "*is he dead?*"

I had been thinking two minutes before of the cold fruit pie that



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glorified our Sunday dinner-table, and how I might perhaps get into the tree at the end of the garden to read in the afternoon. Now an immense fact had come down like a curtain and blotted out all my childish world. My father was lying dead before my eyes. . . . I perceived that my mother was helpless and that things must be done.

"Mother!" I said, "we must get Doctor Beaseley—and carry him indoors.'

## CHAPTER THE THIRD

### SCHOLASTIC

§ 1. My formal education began in a small preparatory school in Bromstead. I went there as a day-boy. The charge for my instruction was mainly set off by the periodic visits of my father with a large bag of battered fossils to lecture to us upon geology. I was one of those fortunate youngsters who take readily to school-work; I had a good memory, versatile interests, and a considerable appetite for commendation, and when I was barely twelve I got a scholarship at the City Merchants' School and was entrusted with a scholar's railway season ticket to Victoria. After my father's death a large and very animated and solidly built uncle in tweeds from Staffordshire, Uncle Minter, my mother's sister's husband, with a remarkable accent and remarkable vowel sounds, who had plunged into the Bromstead home once or twice for the night, but who was otherwise unknown to me, came on the scene, sold off the three gaunt houses with the utmost gusto, invested the proceeds and my father's life insurance money, and got us into a small villa at Penge within sight of that immense façade of glass and iron, the Crystal Palace. Then he retired in a mood of good-natured contempt to his native habitat again. We stayed at Penge until my mother's death.

School became a large part of the world to me, absorbing my time and interest, and I never acquired that detailed and intimate knowledge of Penge and the hilly villadom round about that I have of the town and outskirts of Bromstead.

It was a district of very much the same character, but it was more completely urbanised and nearer to the centre of things; there were the same unfinished roads, the same occasional disconcerted hedges and trees, the same butcher's horse grazing under a builder's notice-board, the same incidental lapses into slum. The Crystal Palace grounds cut off a large part of my walking radius to the west with impassable fences and forbiddingly expensive turnstiles, but it added to the ordinary spectacle of meteorology a great variety of gratuitous fireworks which banged and flared away of a night after supper and drew me abroad to see them better. Such walks as I took, to Croydon, Wimbledon, West Wickham, and Greenwich, impressed upon me the interminable extent of London's residential suburbs; mile after mile one went, between houses, villas, rows of cottages, streets of shops, under railway arches, over railway bridges. I have forgotten the detailed local characteristics—if there were any—of much of that region altogether. I was only there two years, and half my perambulations occurred at dusk or after dark. But with Penge I associate my first realisations of the wonder and beauty of twilight and



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night, the effect of dark walls reflecting lamp-light, and the mystery of blue, haze-veiled hill-sides of houses, the glare of shops by night, the glowing steam and streaming sparks of railway trains and railway signals lit up in the darkness. My first rambles in the evening occurred at Penge—I was becoming a big and independent-spirited boy, and I began my experience of smoking during these twilight prowls with the threepenny packets of American cigarettes then just appearing in the world.

My life centred upon the City Merchants' School. Usually I caught the eight eighteen for Victoria; I had a midday meal and tea; four nights a week I stayed for preparation, and often I was not back home again until within an hour of my bed-time. I spent my half-holidays at school in order to play cricket and football. This and a pretty voracious appetite for miscellaneous reading which was fostered by the Penge Middleton Library did not leave me much leisure for local topography. On Sundays also I sang in the choir at St. Martin's Church; and my mother did not like me to walk out alone on the Sabbath afternoon—she herself slumbered—so that I wrote or read at home. I must confess I was at home as little as I could contrive.

Home, after my father's death, had become a very quiet and uneventful place indeed. My mother had either an unimaginative temperament or her mind was greatly occupied with private religious solicitudes, and I remember her talking to me but little, and that usually upon topics I was anxious to evade. I had developed my own view about Low Church theology long before my father's death, and my meditation upon that event had finished my secret estrangement from my mother's faith. My reason would not permit even a remote chance of his being in hell, he was so manifestly not evil, and this religion would not permit him a remote chance of being out of it. When I was a little boy my mother had taught me to read and write and pray, and had done many things for me; indeed, she persisted in washing me, and even in making my clothes, until I rebelled against these things as indignities. But our minds parted very soon. She never began to understand the mental processes of my play, she never interested herself in my school life and work, she could not understand things I said; and she came, I think, quite insensibly to regard me with something of the same hopeless perplexity she had felt towards my father.

Him she must have wedded under considerable delusions. I do not think he deceived her, indeed, nor do I suspect him of mercenariness in their union; but no doubt he played up to her requirements in the half-ingenuous way that was and still is the quality of most wooing, and presented himself as a very brisk and orthodox young man. I wonder why nearly all love-making has to be fraudulent. Afterwards he must have disappointed her cruelly by letting one aspect after another of his careless, sceptical, experimental temperament appear. Her mind was fixed and definite, she embodied all that confidence in church and decorum and the assurances of the pulpit which was characteristic of the large mass of the English people—for, after all, the rather Low Church section *was* the largest single mass—in early Victorian times. She had dreams, I suspect, of going to church with him side by side—she in a little poke bonnet and a large flounced crinoline, all mauve and magenta and starched, under a little lace-trimmed parasol, and he in a tall silk hat and peg-top trousers and a roll-collar coat and looking rather like the Prince Consort, white angels almost visibly raining benedictions on their amiable progress. Perhaps



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she dreamt gently of much-belaced babies and an interestingly pious (but not too dissenting or fanatical) little girl or boy or so, also angel-haunted. And I think, too, she must have seen herself ruling a seemly "home of taste," with a vivarium in the conservatory that opened out of the drawing-room, or, again, making preserves in the kitchen. My father's science teaching, his diagrams of disembowelled humanity, his pictures of prehistoric beasts that contradicted the Flood, his disposition towards soft shirts and loose tweed suits, his inability to use a clothes brush, his spasmodic reading fits and his bull-dog pipes, must have jarred cruelly with her rather unintelligent anticipations. His wild moments of violent temper when he would swear and smash things, absurd, almost lovable storms that passed like summer thunder, must have been starkly dreadful to her. She was constitutionally inadaptable, and certainly made no attempt to understand or tolerate these outbreaks. She tried them by her standards, and by her standards they were wrong. Her standards hid him from her. The blazing things he said rankled in her mind unforgettably.

As I remember them together they chafed constantly. Her attitude to nearly all his moods and all his enterprises was a sceptical disapproval. She treated him as something that belonged to me and not to her. "*Your* father," she used to call him, as though I had got him for her.

She had married late, and she had, I think, become mentally self-subsisting before her marriage. Even in those Herne Hill days I used to wonder what was going on in her mind, and I find that old speculative curiosity return as I write this. She took a considerable interest in the house-work that our generally servantless condition put upon her—she used to have a charwoman in two or three times a week—but she did not do it with any great skill. She covered most of our furniture with flouncy, ill-fitting covers, and she cooked plainly and without very much judgment. The Penge house, as it contained nearly all our Bromstead things, was crowded with furniture, and is chiefly associated in my mind with the smell of turpentine, a condiment she used very freely upon the veneered mahogany pieces. My mother had an equal dread of "blacks" by day and the "night air," so that our brightly clean windows were rarely open.

She took a morning paper, and she would open it and glance at the headlines, but she did not read it until the afternoon, and then I think she was interested only in the more violent crimes, and in railway and mine disasters, and in the minutest domesticities of the Royal Family. Most of the books at home were my father's, and I do not think she opened any of them. She had one or two volumes that dated from her own youth, and she tried in vain to interest me in them; there was Miss Strickland's *Queens of England*, a book I remember with particular animosity, and *Queechy* and *The Wide, Wide World*. She made these books of hers into a class apart by sewing outer covers upon them of calico and figured muslin. To me in these habiliments they seemed not so much books as confederated old ladies.

My mother was also very punctual with her religious duties, and rejoiced to watch me in the choir.

On winter evenings she occupied an arm-chair on the other side of the table at which I sat, head on hand, reading, and she would be darning stockings or socks or the like. We achieved an effect of rather stuffy comfortableness that was at times soporific, and in a passive way I think she



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found these among her happy times. On such occasions she was wont to put her work down on her knees and fall into a sort of thoughtless musing that would last for long intervals and rouse my curiosity. For, like most young people, I could not imagine mental states without definite forms.

She carried on a correspondence with a number of cousins and friends, writing letters in a slanting Italian hand and dealing mainly with births, marriages, and deaths, business starts (in the vaguest terms), and the distresses of bankruptcy.

And yet, you know, she did have a curious intimate life of her own that I suspected nothing of at the time, that only now becomes credible to me. She kept a diary that is still in my possession, a diary of fragmentary entries in a miscellaneous collection of pocket-books. She put down the texts of the sermons she heard and queer, stiff little comments on casual visitors—"Miss G. and much noisy shrieking, talk about games and such frivolities and croquay. A. delighted and *very attentive*." Such little human entries abound. She had an odd way of never writing a name, only an initial; my father is always "A." and I am always "D." It is manifest she followed the domestic events in the life of the Princess of Wales, who is now Queen, with peculiar interest and sympathy. "Pray G. all may be well," she writes in one such crisis.

But there are things about myself that I still find too poignant to tell easily, certain painful and clumsy circumstances of my birth in very great detail, the distresses of my infantile ailments. Then later I find such things as this: "Heard D. s——"—the "s——" is evidently "swear"—"G. bless and keep my boy from evil." And again, with the thin handwriting shaken by distress: "D. would not go to church and hardened his heart, and said wicked infidel things, much disrespect of the clergy. The anthem is tiresome!!! That men should set up to be wiser than their maker!!!" Then, trebly underlined: "*I fear his father's teaching.*" Dreadful little tangle of misapprehensions and false judgments! More comforting for me to read: "D. very kind and good. He grows more thoughtful every day." I suspect myself of forgotten hypocrisies.

At just one point my mother's papers seem to dip deeper. I think the death of my father must have stirred her for the first time for many years to think for herself. Even she could not go on living in any peace at all, believing that he had indeed been flung headlong into hell. Of this gnawing solicitude she never spoke to me, never, and for her diary also she could find no phrases. But on a loose half-sheet of notepaper between its pages I find this passage that follows, written very carefully. I do not know whose lines they are nor how she came upon them. They run:

> And if there be no meeting past the grave,
> If all is darkness, silence, yet 'tis rest.
> Be not afraid, ye waiting hearts that weep,
> For God still giveth His beloved sleep,
> And if an endless sleep He wills, so best.

That scrap of verse amazed me when I read it. I could even wonder if my mother really grasped the import of what she had copied out. It affected me as if a stone-deaf person had suddenly turned and joined in a whispered conversation. It set me thinking how far a mind quite



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hopelessly limited in its general effect might range. After that I went through all her diaries trying to find something more than a conventional term of tenderness for my father. But I found nothing. And yet somehow there grew upon me the realisation that there had been love. . . . Her love for me, on the other hand, was abundantly expressed.

I knew nothing of that secret life of feeling at the time; such expression as it found was all beyond my schoolboy range. I did not know when I pleased her and I did not know when I distressed her. Chiefly I was aware of my mother as rather dull company, as a mind thorny with irrational conclusions and incapable of explication, as one believing quite wilfully and irritatingly in impossible things. So I suppose it had to be; life was coming to me in new forms and with new requirements. It was essential to our situation that we should fail to understand. After this space of years I have come to realisations and attitudes that dissolve my estrangement from her, I can pierce these barriers, I can see her and feel her as a loving and feeling and desiring and muddle-headed person. There are times when I would have her alive again if only that I might be kind to her for a little while and give her some return for the narrow, intense affection, the tender desires, she evidently lavished so abundantly on me. But then again I ask how I could make that return. And I realise the futility of such dreaming. Her demand was rigid, and to meet it I should need to act and lie.

So she whose blood fed me, whose body made me, lies in my memory as I saw her last, fixed, still, infinitely intimate, infinitely remote. . . .

My own case with my mother, however, does not awaken the same regret I feel when I think of how she misjudged and irked my father and turned his weaknesses into thorns for her own tormenting. I wish I could look back without that little twinge to two people who were both in their different quality so good. But goodness that is narrow is a pedestrian and ineffectual goodness. Her attitude to my father seems to me one of the essentially tragic things that have come to me personally, one of those things that nothing can transfigure, that *remain* sorrowful, that I cannot soothe with any explanation, for as I remember him he was indeed the most lovable of weak, spasmodic men. But my mother had been trained in a hard and narrow system that made evil out of many things not in the least evil and inculcated neither kindliness nor charity. All their estrangement followed from that.

These cramping cults do indeed take an enormous toll of human love and happiness; and not only that, but what we Machiavellians must needs consider, they make frightful breaches in human solidarity. I suppose I am a deeply religious man, as men of my quality go, but I hate more and more as I grow older the dark shadow of intolerance cast by religious organisations. All my life has been darkened by irrational intolerance, by arbitrary, irrational prohibitions and exclusions. Mohammedanism, with its fierce proselytism, has, I suppose, the blackest record of uncharitableness, but most of the Christian sects are tainted, tainted to a degree beyond any of the anterior paganisms, with this same hateful quality. It is their exclusive claim, I suppose, that sends them wrong, the vain ambition that inspires them all to teach a uniform one-sided God and be the one and only gateway to salvation. Deprecation of all outside the household of faith, an organised undervaluation of heretical goodness and lovableness,



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follows necessarily. Every petty difference is exaggerated to the quality of a saving grace or a damning defect. Elaborate precautions are taken to shield the believer's mind against broad or amiable suggestions; the faithful are deterred by dark allusions, by sinister warnings, from books, from theatres, from worldly conversation, from all the kindly instruments that mingle human sympathy. For only by isolating its flock can the organisation survive.

Every month there came to my mother a little magazine called, if I remember rightly, the *Home Churchman*, with the combined authority of print and clerical commendation. It was the most evil thing that ever came into the house, a very devil, a thin little pamphlet with one woodcut illustration on the front page of each number, now the uninviting visage of some exponent of the real and only doctrine and attitudes, now some coral strand in act of welcoming the missionaries of God's mysterious preferences, now a new church in the Victorian Gothic. The vile rag it was! A score of vices that shun the policeman have nothing of its subtle wickedness. It was an outrage upon the natural kindliness of men. The contents were all admirably adjusted to keep a spirit in prison. Their force of sustained suggestion was tremendous. There would be dreadful intimations of the swift retribution that fell upon individuals for Sabbath-breaking and upon nations for weakening towards Ritualism or treating Roman Catholics as tolerable human beings; there would be great rejoicings over the conversion of alleged Jews and terrible descriptions of the death-beds of prominent infidels, with boldly invented last words—the most unscrupulous lying; there would be the appallingly edifying careers of "early piety" lusciously described, or stories of condemned criminals who traced their final ruin unerringly to early laxities of the kind that leads people to give up subscribing to the *Home Churchman*.

Every month that evil spirit brought about a slump in our mutual love. My mother used to read the thing and become depressed and anxious for my spiritual welfare, used to be stirred to unintelligent pestering. . . .

§ 2. A few years ago I met the editor of this same *Home Churchman*. It was at one of the weekly dinners of that Fleet Street dining club, the Blackfriars.

I heard the paper's name with a queer little shock, and surveyed the man with interest. No doubt he was only a successor of the purveyor of discords who darkened my boyhood. It was amazing to find an influence so terrible embodied in a creature so palpably petty. He was seated some way down a table at right angles to the one at which I sat, a man of mean appearance, with a greyish complexion, thin, with a square nose, a heavy, wiry moustache, and a big Adam's apple sticking out between the wings of his collar. He ate with considerable appetite and unconcealed relish, and as his jaw was underhung he chummed and made the moustache wave like reeds in the swell of a steamer. It gave him a conscientious look. After dinner he a little forced himself upon me. At that time, though the shadow of my scandal was already upon me, I still seemed to be shaping for great successes, and he was glad to be in conversation with me and anxious to intimate political sympathy and support. I tried to make him talk of the *Home Churchman* and the kindred publications he ran, but he was manifestly ashamed of his job so far as I was concerned.



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"One wants," he said, pitching himself, as he supposed, in my key, "to put constructive ideas into our readers, but they are narrow, you know, very narrow. Very." He made his moustache and lips express judicious regret. "One has to consider them carefully, one has to respect their attitudes. One dare not go too far with them. One has to feel one's way."

He chummed and the moustache bristled.

A hireling, beyond question, catering for a demand. I gathered there was a home in Tufnell Park and three boys to be fed and clothed and educated. . . .

I had the curiosity to buy a copy of his magazine afterwards, and it seemed much the same sort of thing that had worried my mother in my boyhood. There was the usual Christian hero, this time with mutton-chop whiskers and a long bare upper lip. The Jesuits, it seemed, were still hard at it, and Heaven frightfully upset about the Sunday opening of museums and the falling birth-rate, and as touchy and vindictive as ever. There were two vigorous paragraphs upon the utter damnableness of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, a contagious damnableness, I gathered—one wasn't safe within a mile of Holborn Viaduct—and a foul-mouthed attack on poor little Wilkins the novelist, who was being baited by the moralists at that time for making one of his women characters, not being in holy wedlock, desire a baby and say so. . . .

The broadening of human thought is a slow and complex process. We do go on, we do get on. But when one thinks that people are living and dying now, quarrelling and sulking, misled and misunderstanding, vaguely fearful, condemning and thwarting one another in the close darknesses of these narrow cults—O God! one wants a gale out of heaven, one wants a great wind from the sea!

§ 3. While I lived at Penge two little things happened to me, trivial in themselves and yet in their quality profoundly significant. They had this in common, that they pierced the texture of the life I was quietly taking for granted and let me see through it into realities—realities I had, indeed, known about before, but never realised. Each of these experiences left me with a sense of shock, with all the values in my life perplexingly altered, attempting readjustment. One of these disturbing and illuminating events was that I was robbed of a new pocket-knife, and the other that I fell in love. It was altogether surprising to me to be robbed. You see, as an only child I had always been fairly well looked after and protected, and the result was an amazing confidence in the practical goodness of the people one met in the world. I knew there were robbers in the world, just as I knew there were tigers; that I was ever likely to meet robber or tiger face to face seemed equally impossible.

The knife as I remember it was a particularly jolly one, with all sorts of instruments in it, tweezers, and a thing for getting a stone out of the hoof of a horse, and a corkscrew; it had cost me a carefully accumulated half-crown, and amounted, indeed, to a new experience in knives. I had had it for two or three days, and then one afternoon I dropped it through a hole in my pocket on a footpath crossing a field between Penge and Anerley. I heard it fall in the way one does without at the time appreciating what had happened, then later, before I got home, when my hand wandered into



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my pocket to embrace the still dear new possession, I found it gone, and instantly that memory of something hitting the ground swam up into consciousness. I went back and commenced a search. Almost immediately I was accosted by the leader of a little gang of four or five extremely dirty and ragged boys of assorted sizes and slouching carriage who were coming from the Anerley direction.

"Lost anything, matey?" said he.

I explained.

"'E's dropped 'is knife," said my interlocutor, and joined in the search. "What sort of 'andle was it, matey?" said a small, white-faced, sniffing boy in a big bowler hat. I supplied the information. His sharp little face scrutinised the ground about us.

"*Got* it," he said, and pounced.

"Give it 'ere," said the big boy hoarsely, and secured it.

I walked towards him, serenely confident that he would hand it over to me and that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds.

"No bloomin' fear!" he said, regarding me obliquely. "Oo said it was your knife?"

Remarkable doubts assailed me. "Of course it's my knife," I said. The other boys gathered round me.

"This ain't your knife," said the big boy, and spat casually.

"I dropped it just now."

"Findin's keepin's, *I* believe," said the big boy.

"Nonsense," I said. "Give me my knife."

"'Ow many blades it got?"

"Three."

"And what sort of 'andle?"

"Bone."

"Got a corkscrew like?"

"Yes."

"Ah! This ain't your knife no'ow. See?" He made no offer to show it me.

My breath went. "Look here!" I said, "I saw that kid pick it up. It *is* my knife."

"Rot!" said the big boy, and slowly, deliberately, put my knife into his trouser pocket.

I braced my soul for battle. All civilisation was behind me, but I doubt if it kept the colour in my face. I buttoned my jacket and clenched my fists and advanced on my antagonist—he had, I suppose, the advantage of two years of age and three inches of height. "Hand over that knife," I said.

Then one of the smallest of the band assailed me with extraordinary vigour and swiftness from behind, had an arm round my neck and a knee in my back before I had the slightest intimation of attack, and so got me down. "I got 'im, Bill," squeaked this amazing little ruffian. My nose was flattened by a dirty hand, and as I struck out and hit something like sacking some one kicked my elbow. Two or three seemed to be at me at the same time. Then I rolled over and sat up to discover them all making off, a ragged flight, footballing my cap, my City Merchants' cap, amongst them. I leapt to my feet in a passion of indignation and pursued them.

But I did not overtake them. We are beings of mixed composition,



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and I doubt if mine was a single-minded pursuit. I knew that honour required me to pursue, and I had a vivid impression of having just been down in the dust with a very wiry and active and dirty little antagonist of disagreeable odour and incredible and incalculable unscrupulousness kneeling on me and gripping my arm and neck. I wanted, of course, to be even with him, but also I doubted if catching him would necessarily involve that. They kicked my cap into the ditch at the end of the field and made off compactly along a cinder lane while I turned aside to recover my dishonoured headdress. As I knocked the dust out of that and out of my jacket and brushed my knees and readjusted my very crumpled collar I tried to focus this startling occurrence in my mind.

I had vague ideas of going to a policeman or of complaining at a police station, but some boyish instinct against informing prevented that. No doubt I entertained ideas of vindictive pursuit and murderous reprisals. And I was acutely enraged whenever I thought of my knife. The thing, indeed, rankled in my mind for weeks and weeks and altered all the flavour of my world for me. It was the first time I glimpsed the simple brute violence that lurks and peeps beneath our civilisation A certain kindly complacency of attitude towards the palpably lower classes was qualified for ever.

§ 4. But the other experience was still more cardinal. It was the first clear intimation of a new *motif* in life, the sex *motif*, that was to rise and increase and accumulate power and enrichment and interweave with and at last dominate all my life.

It was when I was nearly fifteen this happened. It is inseparably connected in my mind with the dusk of warm September evenings. I never met the girl I loved by daylight, and I have forgotten her name. It was some insignificant name.

Yet the peculiar quality of the adventure keeps it shining darkly like some deep-coloured gem in the common setting of my memories. It came as something new and strange, something that did not join on to anything else in my life or connect with any of my thoughts or beliefs or habits; it was a wonder, a mystery, a discovery about myself, a discovery about the whole world. Only in after-years did sexual feeling lose that isolation and spread itself out to illuminate and pervade and at last possess the whole broad vision of life.

It was in that phase of an urban youth's development, the phase of the cheap cigarette, that this thing happened. One evening I came by chance on a number of young people promenading by the light of a row of shops towards Beckington, and, with all the glory of a glowing cigarette between my lips, I joined their strolling number. These twilight parades of young people, youngsters chiefly of the lower middle class, are one of the odd social developments of the great suburban growths—unkindly critics, blind to the inner meanings of things, call them, I believe, Monkeys' Parades. The shop apprentices, the young work-girls, the boy clerks, and so forth, stirred by mysterious intimations, spend their first earned money upon collars and ties, chiffon hats, smart lace collars, walking-sticks, sunshades, or cigarettes, and come valiantly into the vague, transfiguring mingling of gas-light and evening, to walk up and down, to eye meaningly, even to accost and make friends. It is a queer instinctive revolt from the narrow,



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limited, friendless homes in which so many find themselves, a going out towards something, romance if you will, beauty, that has suddenly become a need—a need that hitherto has lain dormant and unsuspected. They promenade.

Vulgar !—it is as vulgar as the spirit that calls the moth abroad in the evening and lights the body of the glow-worm in the night. I made my way through the throng, a little contemptuously, as became a public-school boy, my hands in my pockets—none of your cheap canes for me !—and very careful of the lie of my cigarette upon my lips. And two girls passed me, one a little taller than the other, with dim, warm-tinted faces under clouds of dark hair, and with dark eyes like pools reflecting stars.

I half turned, and the shorter one glanced back at me over her shoulder —I could draw you now the pose of her cheek and neck and shoulder—and instantly I was as passionately in love with the girl as I have ever been before or since, as any man ever was with any woman. I turned about and followed them, I flung away my cigarette ostentatiously and lifted my school cap and spoke to them.

The girl answered shyly, with her dark eyes on my face. What I said and what she said I cannot remember, but I have little doubt it was something absolutely vapid. It really did not matter ; the thing was we had met. I felt as I think a new-hatched moth must feel when suddenly its urgent, headlong searching brings it in tremulous amazement upon its mate.

We met, covered from each other, with all the nets of civilisation keeping us apart. We walked side by side.

It led to scarcely more than that. I think we met four or five times altogether, and always with her nearly silent elder sister on the other side of her. We walked on the last two occasions arm in arm, furtively caressing each other's hands ; we went away from the glare of the shops into the quiet roads of villadom, and there we whispered instead of talking and looked closely into one another's warm and shaded face. " Dear," I whispered very daringly, and she answered, " Dear ! " We had a vague sense that we wanted more of that quality of intimacy and more. We wanted each other as one wants beautiful music again or to breathe again the scent of flowers.

And that is all there was between us. The events are nothing ; the thing that matters is the way in which this experience stabbed through the common stuff of life and left it pierced with a light, with a huge new interest shining through the rent.

When I think of it I can recall even now the warm mystery of her face, her lips a little apart—lips that I never kissed—her soft, shadowed throat, and I feel again the sensuous stir of her proximity. . . .

These two girls never told me their surname nor let me approach their house. They made me leave them at the corner of a road of small houses near Penge Station. And quite abruptly, without any intimation, they vanished and came to the meeting-place no more, they vanished as a moth goes out of a window into the night, and left me possessed by an intolerable want. . . .

The affair pervaded my existence for many weeks. I could not do my work and I could not rest at home. Night after night I promenaded up and down that Monkeys' Parade full of an unappeasable desire, with a



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thwarted sense of something just begun that ought to have gone on. I went backwards and forwards on the way to the vanishing-place, and at last explored the forbidden road that had swallowed them up. But I never saw her again, except that later she came to me, my symbol of womanhood, in dreams. How my blood was stirred! I lay awake of nights whispering in the darkness for her. I prayed for her.

Indeed, that girl, who probably forgot the last vestiges of me when her first real kiss came to her, ruled and haunted me, gave a Queen to my imagination and a texture to all my desires until I became a man.

I generalised her at last. I suddenly discovered that poetry was about her and that she was the key to all that had hitherto seemed nonsense about love. I took to reading novels, and if the heroine could not possibly be like her, dusky and warm and starlike, I put the book aside. . . .

I hesitate and add here one other confession. I want to tell this thing because it seems to me we are altogether too restrained and secretive about such matters. The cardinal thing in life sneaks in to us darkly and shamefully like a thief in the night.

One day during my Cambridge days—it must have been in my first year, before I knew Hatherleigh—I saw in a print-shop window near the Strand an engraving of a girl that reminded me sharply of Penge and its dusky encounter. It was just a half-length of a bare-shouldered, bare-breasted Oriental with arms akimbo, smiling faintly. I looked at it, went my way, then turned back and bought it. I felt I must have it. The odd thing is that I was more than a little shamefaced about it. I did not have it framed and hung in my room open to the criticism of my friends, but I kept it in the drawer of my writing-table. And I kept that drawer locked for a year. It speedily merged with and became identified with the dark girl of Penge. That engraving became in a way my mistress. Often when I had sported my oak and was supposed to be reading I was sitting with it before me.

Obeying some instinct, I kept the thing very secret indeed. For a time nobody suspected what was locked in my drawer nor what was locked in me. I seemed as sexless as my world required.

§ 5. These things stabbed through my life, intimations of things above and below and before me. They had an air of being no more than incidents, interruptions. . . .

The broad substance of my existence at this time was the City Merchants' School. Home was a place where I slept and read, and the mooning explorations of the South-Eastern postal district which occupied the restless evenings and spare days of my vacations mere interstices giving glimpses of enigmatical lights and distant spaces between the woven threads of a schoolboy's career. I was a keen worker through all that time, a satisfactory youngster to teach, very ambitious for distinction, and my course lay straight and easy to scholarships and the university. I did not have to overwork to do all that was required of me. I took a place between mediocre and good in most of the school games, and I still had plenty of energy left over for miscellaneous reading, debating society, friendships, and discursive talk. I indulged a keen interest in political things.

School life began for me every morning at Herne Hill, for there I was joined by three or four other boys and the rest of the way we went to-



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gether. Most of the streets and roads we traversed in our morning's walk from Victoria are still intact; the storms of rebuilding that have submerged so much of my boyhood's London have passed and left them, and I have revived the impression of them again and again in recent years as I have clattered dinnerward in a hansom or hummed along in a motor-cab to some engagement. The main gate still looks out with the same expression of ancient, well-proportioned kindliness upon St. Margaret's Close. There are imposing new science laboratories in Chambers Street, indeed, but the old playing-fields are unaltered except for the big electric trams that go droning and spitting blue flashes along the western boundary. I know Rattan, the new Head, very well, but I have not been inside the school to see if it has changed at all since I went up to Cambridge.

I took all they put before us very readily as a boy, for I had a mind of vigorous appetite, but since I have grown mentally to man's estate and developed a more and more comprehensive view of our national process and our national needs I am more and more struck by the oddity of the educational methods pursued, their aimless disconnectedness from the constructive forces in the community. I suppose if we are to view the public school as anything more than an institution that has just chanced to happen, we must treat it as having a definite function towards the general scheme of the nation, as being in a sense designed to take the crude young male of the more or less responsible class, to correct his harsh egotisms, broaden his outlook, give him a grasp of the contemporary developments he will presently be called upon to influence and control, and send him on to the university to be made a leading and ruling social man. It is easy enough to carp at schoolmasters and set up for an Educational Reformer, I know, but still it is impossible not to feel how infinitely more effectually—given certain impossibilities, perhaps—the job might be done.

My memory of school has, indeed, no hint whatever of that quality of elucidation it seems reasonable to demand from it. Here all about me was London, a vast, inexplicable being, a vortex of gigantic forces, that filled and overwhelmed me with impressions, that stirred my imagination to a perpetual vague inquiry; and my school not only offered no key to it, but had practically no comment to make upon it at all. We were within three miles of Westminster and Charing Cross; the Government offices of a fifth of mankind were all within an hour's stroll; great economic changes were going on under our eyes; now the hoardings flamed with election placards; now the Salvation Army and now the unemployed came trailing in procession through the winter-grey streets; now the newspaper placards outside news-shops told of battles in strange places, now of amazing discoveries, now of sinister crimes; abject squalor and poverty, imperial splendour and luxury, Buckingham Palace, Rotten Row, Mayfair, the slums of Pimlico, garbage-littered streets of bawling costermongers, the inky silver of the barge-laden Thames—such was the background of our days. We went across St. Margaret's Close and through the school gate into a quiet, puerile world apart from all these things. We joined in the earnest acquirement of all that was necessary for Greek epigrams and Latin verse, and for the rest played games. We dipped down into something clear and elegantly proportioned and time-worn, and for all its high resolve of stalwart virility a little feeble, like our blackened and decayed portals by Inigo Jones.



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Within we were taught as the chief subjects of instruction Latin and Greek. We were taught very badly, because the men who taught us did not habitually use either of these languages—nobody uses them any more now, except, perhaps, for the Latin of a few Levantine monasteries. At the utmost our men read them. We were taught these languages because long ago Latin had been the language of civilisation; the one way of escape from the narrow and localised life had lain in those days through Latin, and afterwards Greek had come in as the vehicle of a flood of new and amazing ideas. Once these two languages had been the sole means of initiation to the detached criticism and partial comprehension of the world. I can imagine the fierce zeal of our first Heads, Gardener and Roper, teaching Greek like passionate missionaries, as a progressive Chinaman might teach English to the boys of Pekin, clumsily, impatiently, with rod and harsh urgency, but sincerely, patriotically, because they felt that behind it lay revelations, the irresistible stimulus to a new phase of history. That was long ago. A new great world, a vaster Imperialism had arisen about the school, had assimilated all these amazing and incredible ideas, had gone on to new and yet more amazing developments of its own. But the City Merchants' School still made the substance of its teaching Latin and Greek; still, with no thought of rotating crops, sowed in a dream amidst the harvesting.

There is no fierceness left in the teaching now. Just after I went up to Trinity, Gates, our Head, wrote a review article in defence of our curriculum. In this, among other indiscretions, he asserted that it was impossible to write good English without an illuminating knowledge of the classic tongues, and he split an infinitive and failed to button up a sentence in saying so. His main argument conceded every objection a reasonable person could make to the City Merchants' curriculum. He admitted that translation had now placed all the wisdom of the past at a common man's disposal, that scarcely a field of endeavour remained in which modern work had not long since passed beyond the ancient achievement. He disclaimed any utility. But there was, he said, a peculiar magic in these grammatical exercises no other subjects of instruction possessed. Nothing else provided the same strengthening and orderly discipline for the mind.

He said that, knowing the Senior Classics he did, himself a Senior Classic!

Yet in a dim, confused way I think he was making out a case. In schools as he knew them, and with the sort of assistant available, the sort of assistant who has been trained entirely on the old lines, he could see no other teaching nearly so effectual in developing attention, restraint, sustained constructive effort, and various yet systematic adjustment. And that was as far as his imagination could go.

It is infinitely easier to begin organised human affairs than end them; the curriculum and the social organisation of the English public school are the crowning instances of that. They go on because they have begun. Schools are not only immortal institutions, but reproductive ones. Our founder, Jabez Arvon, knew nothing, I am sure, of Gates's pedagogic values, and would, I feel certain, have dealt with them disrespectfully.

But public schools and university colleges sprang into existence correlated; the scholars went on to the universities and came back to teach the schools, to teach as they themselves had been taught, before they had ever



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made any real use of the teaching; the crowd of boys herded together, a crowd perpetually renewed and unbrokenly the same, adjusted itself by means of spontaneously developed institutions. In a century, by its very success, this revolutionary innovation of Renascence public schools had become an immense tradition woven closely into the fabric of the national life. Intelligent and powerful people ceased to talk Latin or read Greek; they had got what was wanted; but that only left the schoolmaster the freer to elaborate his point and methods. Since most men of any importance or influence in the country had been through the mill, it was naturally a little difficult to persuade them that it was not quite the best and most ennobling mill the wit of man could devise. And, moreover, they did not want their children made strange to them. There was all the machinery and all the men needed to teach the old subjects, and none to teach whatever new the critic might propose. Such science instruction as my father gave seemed, indeed, the uninviting alternative to the classical grind. It was certainly an altogether inferior instrument at that time.

So it was I occupied my mind with the exact study of dead languages for seven long years. It was the strangest of detachments. We would sit under the desk of such a master as Topham like creatures who had fallen into an enchanted pit, and he would do his considerable best to work us up to enthusiasm for, let us say, a Greek play. If we flagged he would lash himself to revive us. He would walk about the class-room mouthing great lines in a rich roar and asking us with a flushed face and shining eyes if it was not "*glorious*." The very sight of Greek letters brings back to me the dingy, faded, ink-splashed quality of our class-room, the banging of books, Topham's disordered hair, the sheen of his alpaca gown, his deep, unmusical intonations, and the wide striding of his creaking boots. Glorious! And being plastic human beings we would consent that it was glorious, and some of us even achieved an answering reverberation and a sympathetic flush. I at times responded freely. We all accepted from him unquestioningly that these melodies, these strange sounds, exceeded any possibility of beauty that lay in the Gothic intricacy, the splash and glitter, the jar and recovery, the stabbing lights, the heights and broad distances of our English tongue. That, indeed, was the chief sin of him. It was not that he was for Greek and Latin, but that he was fiercely against every beauty that was neither classic nor deferred to classical canons.

And what exactly did we make of it, we seniors who understood it best? We visualised dimly through that dust and the grammatical difficulties the spectacle of the chorus chanting grotesquely, helping out protagonist and antagonist, masked and buskined, with the telling of incomprehensible parricides, of inexplicable incest, of gods faded beyond symbolism, of that Relentless Law we did not believe in for a moment, that no modern Western European can believe in. We thought of the characters in the unconvincing wigs and costumes of our school performance. No Gilbert Murray had come as yet to touch these things to life again. It was like the ghost of an antiquarian's toy theatre, a ghost that crumbled and condensed into a gritty dust of construing as one looked at it.

Marks, shindies, prayers, and punishments, all flavoured with the leathery stuffiness of time-worn Big Hall. . . .

And then out one would come through our grey old gate into the evening light, and the spectacle of London hurrying like a cataract, London



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in black and brown and blue and gleaming silver, roaring like the very loom of Time. We came out into the new world no teacher has yet had the power and courage to grasp and expound. Life and death sang all about one, joys and fears on such a scale, in such an intricacy, as never Greek nor Roman knew. The interminable procession of horse omnibuses went lumbering past, bearing countless people we knew not whence, we knew not whither, hansoms clattered, foot-passengers jostled one, a thousand appeals of shop and hoarding caught the eye. The multi-coloured lights of window and street mingled with the warm glow of the declining day under the softly flushing London skies ; the ever-changing placards, the shouting newsvendors, told of a kaleidoscopic drama all about the globe. One did not realise what had happened to us, but the voice of Topham was suddenly drowned and lost, he and his minute, remote gesticulations. . . .

That submerged and isolated curriculum did not even join on to living interests where it might have done so. We were left absolutely to the hints of the newspapers, to casual political speeches, to the cartoons of the comic papers or a chance reading of some Socialist pamphlet for any general ideas whatever about the huge, swirling world-process in which we found ourselves. I always look back with particular exasperation to the cessation of our modern history at the year 1815. There it pulled up abruptly, as though it had come upon something indelicate. . . .

But after all what would Topham or Flack have made of the huge adjustments of the nineteenth century ? Flack was the chief cricketer on the staff ; he belonged to that great cult which pretends that the place of this or that county in the struggle for the championship is a matter of supreme importance to boys. He obliged us to affect a passionate interest in the progress of county matches, to work up unnatural enthusiasms. What a fuss there would be when some well-trained boy, panting as if from Marathon, appeared with an evening paper ! " I say, you chaps, Middlesex all out for a hundred and five ! "

Under Flack's pressure I became, I confess, a cricket humbug of the first class. I applied myself industriously year by year to mastering scores and averages ; I pretended that Lords or the Oval were the places nearest Paradise for me (I never went to either). Through a slight mistake about the county boundary, I adopted Surrey for my loyalty, though as a matter of fact we were by some five hundred yards or so in Kent. It did quite as well for my purposes. I bowled rather straight and fast, and spent endless hours acquiring the skill to bowl Flack out. He was a bat in the Corinthian style, rich and voluminous, and succumbed very easily to a low shooter or an unexpected Yorker, but usually he was caught early by long leg. The difficulty was to bowl him before he got caught. He loved to lift a ball to leg. After one had clean bowled him at the practice nets one deliberately gave him a ball to leg just to make him feel nice again.

Flack went about a world of marvels dreaming of leg hits. He has been observed, going across the Park on his way to his highly respectable club in Piccadilly, to break from profound musings into a strange brief dance that ended with an imaginary swipe with his umbrella, a roofer, over the trees towards Buckingham Palace. The hit accomplished, Flack resumed his way.

Inadequately instructed foreigners would pass him in terror, needlessly alert.



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§ 6. These schoolmasters move through my memory as always a little distant and more than a little incomprehensible. Except when they wore flannels, I saw them almost always in old college caps and gowns, a uniform which greatly increased their detachment from the world of actual men. Gates, the Head, was a lean loose-limbed man; rather stupid, I discovered when I reached the Sixth and came into contact with him, but honest, simple, and very eager to be liberal-minded. He was bald, with an almost conical baldness, with a grizzled pointed beard, small-featured, and, under the stresses of a *Zeitgeist* that demanded liberality, with an expression of puzzled but resolute resistance to his own unalterable opinions. He made a tall, dignified figure in his gown. In my junior days he spoke to me only three or four times, and then he annoyed me by giving me a wrong surname; it was a sore point, because I was an outsider and not one of the old school families, the Shoesmiths, the Naylors, the Marklows, the Tophams, the Pevisses, and such-like, who came generation after generation. I recall him most vividly against the background of faded brown book-backs in the old library in which we less destructive seniors were trusted to work, with the light from the stained-glass window falling in coloured patches on his face. It gave him the appearance of having no colour of his own. He had a habit of scratching the beard on his cheek as he talked, and he used to come and consult us about things, and invariably do as we said. That, in his phraseology, was "maintaining the traditions of the school."

He had, indeed, an effect not of a man directing a school, but of a man captured and directed by a school. Dead and gone Elizabethans had begotten a monster that could carry him about in its mouth.

Yet being a man, as I say, with his hair a little stirred by a *Zeitgeist* that made for change, Gates did at times display a disposition towards developments. City Merchants had no modern side, and utilitarian spirits were carping in the *Pall Mall Gazette* and elsewhere at the omissions from our curriculum, and particularly at our want of German. Moreover, four classes still worked together with much clashing and uproar in the old Big Hall that had once held in a common tumult the entire school. Gates used to come and talk to us older fellows about these things.

"I don't wish to innovate unduly," he used to say, "but we ought to get in some German, you know—for those who like it. The Army men will be wanting it some of these days."

He referred to the organisation of regular evening preparation for the lower boys in Big Hall as a "revolutionary change," but he achieved it, and he declared he began the replacement of the hacked wooden tables, at which the boys had worked since Tudor days, by sloping desks with safety inkpots and scientifically adjustable seats "with grave misgivings." And though he never birched a boy in his life and was, I am convinced, morally incapable of such a scuffle, he retained the block and birch in the school through all his term of office and spoke at the Headmasters' Conference in temperate approval of corporal chastisement, comparing it, dear soul, to the power of the sword. . . .

I wish I could in some measure and without tediousness convey the effect of his discourses to General Assembly in Big Hall. But that is like trying to draw the obverse and reverse of a sixpence worn to complete illegibility. His tall, fine figure stood high on the daïs, his thoughtful tenor filled the air as he steered his hazardous way through sentences that dragged



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inconclusive tails and dropped redundant prepositions. And he pleaded ever so urgently, ever so finely, that what we all knew for Sin was sinful and on the whole best avoided altogether, and so went on with deepening notes, and even with short arresting gestures of the right arm and hand, to stir and exhort us towards goodness, towards that modern, unsectarian goodness, goodness in general and nothing in particular, which the *Zeitgeist* seemed to indicate in those transitional years.

§ 7. The school never quite got hold of me. Partly, I think, that was because I was a day-boy and so freer than most of the boys, partly because of a temperamental disposition to see things in my own way and have my private dreams, partly because I was a little antagonised by the family traditions that ran through the school. I was made to feel at first that I was a rank outsider, and I never quite forgot it. I suffered very little bullying and I never had a fight—in all my time there were only three fights—but I followed my own curiosities. I was already a very keen theologian and politician before I was fifteen. I was also intensely interested in modern warfare. I read the morning papers in the reading-room during the midday recess, never missed the illustrated weeklies, and often when I could afford it I bought a *Pall Mall Gazette* on my way home.

I do not think that I was very exceptional in that; most intelligent boys, I believe, want naturally to be men and are keenly interested in men's affairs. There is not the universal passion for a magnified puerility among them it is customary to assume. I was, indeed, a voracious reader of everything but boys' books—which I detested—and fiction. I read histories, travel, popular science, and controversy with particular zest, and I loved maps. School work and school games were quite subordinate affairs for me. I worked well and made a passable figure at games, and I do not think I was abnormally insensitive to the fine quality of our school, to the charm of its mediæval nucleus, its Gothic cloisters, its scraps of Palladian and its dignified Georgian extensions; the contrast of the old quiet that in spite of our presence pervaded it everywhere with the rushing and impending London all about it was, indeed, a continual pleasure to me. But these things were certainly not the living and central interests of my life.

I had to conceal my wider outlook to a certain extent—from the masters even more than from the boys. Indeed, I only let myself go freely with one boy, Britten, my especial chum, the son of the Agent-General for East Australia. We two discovered in a chance conversation *à propos* of a map in the library that we were both of us curious why there were Malays in Madagascar and how the Mecca pilgrims came from the East Indies before steamships were available. Neither of us had suspected that there was any one at all in the school who knew or cared a rap about the Indian Ocean, except as water on the way to India. But Britten had come up through the Suez Canal and his ship had spoken a pilgrim ship on the way. It gave him a startling quality of living knowledge. From these pilgrims we got to a comparative treatment of religions, and from that, by a sudden plunge, to entirely sceptical and disrespectful confessions concerning Gates's last outbreak of simple piety in School Assembly. We became congenial intimates from that hour.

The discovery of Britten happened to me when we were both in the Lower Fifth. Previously there had been a water-tight compartment



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between the books I read and the thoughts they begot on the one hand and human intercourse on the other. Now I really began my higher education, and aired and examined and developed in conversation the doubts, the ideas, the interpretations that had been forming in my mind. As we were both day-boys with a good deal of control over our time we organised walks and expeditions together, and my habit of solitary and rather vague prowling gave way to much more definite joint enterprises. I went several times to his house—he was the youngest of several brothers, one of whom was a medical student and let us assist at the dissection of a cat—and once or twice in vacation time he came to Penge and we went with parcels of provisions to do a thorough day in the grounds and galleries of the Crystal Palace, ending with the fireworks at close quarters. We went in a river steamboat down to Greenwich, and, fired by that, made an excursion to Margate and back; we explored London docks and Bethnal Green Museum, Petticoat Lane, and all sorts of out-of-the-way places together.

We confessed shyly to one another a common secret vice, "phantom warfare." When we walked alone, especially in the country, we had both developed the same practice of fighting an imaginary battle about us as we walked. As we went along we were generals, and our attacks pushed along on either side, crouching and gathering behind hedges, cresting ridges, occupying copses, rushing open spaces, fighting from house to house. The hill-sides about Penge were honeycombed in my imagination with the pits and trenches I had created to check a victorious invader coming out of Surrey. For him West Kensington was chiefly important as the scene of a desperate and successful last stand of insurrectionary troops (who had seized the Navy, the Bank, and other advantages) against a Royalist army—reinforced by Germans—advancing for reasons best known to themselves by way of Harrow and Ealing. It is a secret and solitary game, as we found when we tried to play it together. We made a success of that only once. All the way down to Margate we schemed defences, and assailed and fought them as we came back against the sunset. Afterwards we recapitulated all that conflict by means of a large-scale map of the Thames and little ironclads in plan cut out of paper.

A subsequent revival of these imaginings was brought about by Britten's luck in getting, through a friend of his father's, admission for us both to the spectacle of Volunteer officers fighting the war game in Caxton Hall. We developed a war game of our own at Britten's home with nearly a couple of hundred lead soldiers, some excellent spring cannons that shot hard and true at six yards, hills of books, and a constantly elaborated set of rules. For some months that occupied an immense proportion of our leisure. Some of our battles lasted several days. We kept the game a profound secret from the other fellows. They would not have understood.

And we also began—it was certainly before we were sixteen—to write, for the sake of writing. We liked writing. We had discovered Lamb and the best of the middle articles in such weeklies as the *Saturday Gazette*, and we imitated them. Our minds were full of dim, uncertain things we wanted to drag out into the light of expression. Britten had got hold of *In Memoriam*, and I had disinterred Pope's *Essay on Man* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, and these things had set our theological and cosmic solicitudes talking. I was somewhere between sixteen and eighteen, I know, when he and I walked along the Thames Embankment confessing shamefully to one



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another that we had never read Lucretius. We thought every one who mattered had read Lucretius.

When I was nearly sixteen my mother was taken ill very suddenly and died of some perplexing complaint that involved a post-mortem examination; it was, I think, the trouble that has since those days been recognised as appendicitis. This led to a considerable change in my circumstances; the house at Penge was given up, and my Staffordshire uncle arranged for me to lodge during school terms with a needy solicitor and his wife in Vicars Street, S.W., about a mile and a half from the school. So it was I came right into London; I had almost two years of London before I went to Cambridge. Those were our great days together. Afterwards we were torn apart; Britten went to Oxford, and our circumstances never afterwards threw us continuously together until the days of the *Blue Weekly*.

As boys, we walked together, read and discussed the same books, pursued the same inquiries. We got a reputation as inseparables and the nickname of the Rose and the Lily, for Britten was short and thick-set, with dark, close curling hair and a ruddy Irish type of face; I was lean and fair-haired, and some inches taller than he. Our talk ranged widely, and yet had certain very definite limitations. We were amazingly free with politics and religion, we went to that little meeting-house of William Morris's at Hammersmith and worked out the principles of Socialism pretty thoroughly, and we got up the Darwinian theory with the help of Britten's medical-student brother and the galleries of the Natural History Museum in Cromwell Road. Those wonderful cases on the ground floor illustrating mimicry, dimorphism, and so forth, were new in our times, and we went through them with earnest industry and tried over our Darwinism in the light of that. Such topics we did exhaustively. But on the other hand I do not remember any discussion whatever of human sex or sexual relationships. There, in spite of intense secret curiosities, our lips were sealed by a peculiar shyness. And I do not believe we ever had occasion either of us to use the word "love." It was not only that we were instinctively shy of the subject, but that we were mightily ashamed of the extent of our ignorance and uncertainty in these matters. We evaded them elaborately with an assumption of exhaustive knowledge.

We certainly had no shyness about theology. We marked the emancipation of our spirits from the frightful teachings that had oppressed our boyhood by much indulgence in blasphemous wit. We had a secret literature of irreverent rhymes and a secret art of theological caricature. Britten's father had delighted his family by reading aloud from Dr. Richard Garnett's *Twilight of the Gods*, and Britten conveyed the precious volume to me. That and the *Bab Ballads* were the inspiration of some of our earliest lucubrations.

For an imaginative boy the first experience of writing is like a tiger's first taste of blood, and our literary flowerings led very directly to the revival of the school magazine, which had been comatose for some years. But there we came upon a disappointment.

§ 7. In that revival we associated certain other of the Sixth Form boys, and notably one for whom our enterprise was to lay the foundations of a career that has ended in the House of Lords—Arthur Cossington, now Lord



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Paddockhurst. Cossington was at that time a rather heavy, rather good-looking boy who was chiefly eminent in cricket, an outsider even as we were, and preoccupied, no doubt, had we been sufficiently detached to observe him, with private imaginings very much of the same quality and spirit as our own. He was, we were inclined to think, rather a sentimentalist, rather a *poseur*. He affected a concise, emphatic style, played chess very well, betrayed a belief in will-power, and earned Britten's secret hostility, Britten being a sloven, by the invariable neatness of his collars and ties. He came into our magazine with a vigour that we found extremely surprising and unwelcome.

Britten and I had wanted to write. We had, indeed, figured our project modestly as a manuscript magazine of satirical, liberal, and brilliant literature by which in some rather inexplicable way the vague tumult of ideas that teemed within us was to find form and expression; Cossington, it was manifest from the outset, wanted neither to write nor writing, but a magazine. I remember the inaugural meeting in Shoesmith Major's study—we had had great trouble in getting it together—and how effectually Cossington bolted with the proposal.

"I think we fellows ought to run a magazine," said Cossington. "The school used to have one. A school like this ought to have a magazine."

"The last one died in '84," said Shoesmith from the hearthrug. "Called the *Observer*. Rot rather."

"Bad title," said Cossington.

"There was a *Tatler* before that," said Britten, sitting on the writing-table at the window, that was closed to deaden the cries of the Lower School at play, and clashing his boots together.

"We want something suggestive of City Merchants'."

"*City Merchandise*," said Britten.

"Too fanciful. What of *Arvonian?* Richard Arvon was our founder, and it seems almost a duty——"

"They call them all -usians or -onians," said Britten.

"I like *City Merchandise*," I said. "We could probably find a quotation to suggest—oh! mixed good things."

Cossington regarded me abstractedly.

"Don't want to put the accent on the *City*, do we?" said Shoesmith, who had a feeling for county families, and Naylor supported him by a murmur of approval.

"We ought to call it the *Arvonian*," decided Cossington, "and we might very well have underneath, 'With which is incorporated the *Observer*.' That picks up the old traditions, makes an appeal to Old Boys and all that, and it gives us something to print under the title."

I still held out for *City Merchandise*, which had taken my fancy. "Some of the chaps' people won't like it," said Naylor; "certain not to. And it sounds Rum."

"Sounds Weird," said a boy who had not hitherto spoken.

"We aren't going to do anything Queer," said Shoesmith pointedly, not looking at Britten.

The question of the title had manifestly gone against us. "Oh! *have* it *Arvonian*," I said.

"And next, what size shall we have?" said Cossington.

"Something like *Macmillan's Magazine*—or *Longmans'; Longmans'* is



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better because it has a whole page, not columns. It makes no end of difference to one's effects."

"What effects?" asked Shoesmith abruptly.

"Oh! a pause or a white line or anything. You've got to write closer for a double column. It's nuggety. You can't get a swing on your prose." I had discussed this thoroughly with Britten.

"If the fellows are going to write——" began Britten.

"We ought to keep off fine writing," said Shoesmith. "It's cheek. I vote we don't have any."

"We shan't get any," said Cossington; and then as an olive branch to me, "unless Remington does a bit. Or Britten. But it's no good making too much space for it."

"We ought to be very careful about the writing," said Shoesmith. "We don't want to give ourselves away."

"I vote we ask old Topham to see us through," said Naylor.

Britten groaned aloud and every one regarded him. "Greek epigrams on the fellows' names," he said. "Small beer in ancient bottles. Let's get a stuffed broody hen to *sit* on the magazine."

"We might do worse than a Greek epigram," said Cossington. "One in each number. It—it impresses parents and keeps up our classical tradition. And the masters *can* help. We don't want to antagonise them. Of course—we've got to departmentalise. Writing is only one section of the thing. The *Arvonian* has to stand for the school. There's questions of space and questions of expense. We can't turn out a great chunk of printed prose like—like wet cold toast and call it a magazine."

Britten writhed, appreciating the image.

"There's to be a section of sports. *You* must do that."

"I'm not going to do any fine writing," said Shoesmith.

"What you've got to do is just to list all the chaps and put a note to their play: 'Naylor Minor must pass more. Football isn't the place for extreme Individualism.' 'Ammersham shapes well as half-back.' Things like that."

"I could do that all right," said Shoesmith, brightening and manifestly becoming pregnant with judgments.

"One great thing about a magazine of this sort," said Cossington, "is to mention just as many names as you can in each number. It keeps the interest alive. Chaps will turn it over looking for their own little bit. Then it all lights up for them."

"Do you want any reports of matches?" Shoesmith broke from his meditation.

"Rather. With comments."

"'Naylor surpassed himself and negotiated the lemon safely home,'" said Shoesmith.

"Shut it," said Naylor modestly.

"Exactly," said Cossington. "That gives us three features," touching them off on his fingers, "Epigram, Literary Section, Sports. Then we want a section to shove anything into, a joke, a notice of anything that's going on. So on. Our Note-book."

"Oh, hell!" said Britten, and clashed his boots, to the silent disapproval of every one.

"Then we want an editorial."



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"A *what?*" cried Britten, with a note of real terror in his voice.

"Well, don't we? Unless we have Our Note-book to begin on the front page. It gives a scrappy effect to do that. We want something manly and straightforward and a bit thoughtful, about Patriotism, say, or *Esprit de corps*, or After-life."

I looked at Britten. Hitherto we had not considered Cossington mattered very much in the world.

He went over us as a motor-car goes over a dog. There was a sort of energy about him, a new sort of energy to us; we had never realised that anything of the sort existed in the world. We were hopelessly at a disadvantage. Almost instantly he had developed a clear and detailed vision of a magazine made up of everything that was most acceptable in the magazines that flourished in the adult world about us, and had determined to make it a success. He had by a kind of instinct, as it were, synthetically plagiarised every successful magazine and breathed into this dusty mixture the breath of life. He was elected at his own suggestion managing director, with the earnest support of Shoesmith and Naylor, and conducted the magazine so successfully and brilliantly that he even got a whole back page of advertisements from the big sports shop in Holborn and made the printers pay at the same rate for a notice of certain books of their own which they said they had inserted by inadvertency to fill up space. The only literary contribution in the first number was a column by Topham in faultless stereotyped English in deprecation of some fancied evil called Utilitarian Studies, and ending with that noble old quotation:

To the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome.

And Flack crowded us out of number two with a bright little paper on "The Humours of Cricket," and the Head himself was profusely thoughtful all over the editorial under the heading of "The School Chapel; and How it Seems to an Old Boy."

Britten and I found it difficult to express to each other with any grace or precision what we felt about that magazine.

(*To be continued*)



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# The Month

It is, no doubt, a little hard on Tariff Reformers and the professional cow-punchers of its propagation that just at the time when the "wicked Radical Government" is ruining the Empire, demoralising trade and driving capital from the country, the public and the City have never had a more astoundingly good time of it, utterly regardless of the "grave constitutional crisis," in which most happy and profitable diversion both Commoner and Peer have mutually benefited. The "boom" is elastic in more ways than one. It shows how foolish was all the talk of the bankers, of the politicians, and of the "Pied Pipers" who set the tune about the "very serious" matter of English capital leaving the country, the capitalised denationalisation of England and what not other recapitulation of woe which, emanating from the bankers, terrified us very much indeed, until the rubber jollification erased our fears, and we began to think it out for ourselves.

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And what do we find—national misery, stagnation in Mincing Lane, bankruptcy in Threadneedle Street, welting trade, whole industries crumbling and falling to pieces—as if capital could be withdrawn without capital *coming in*—paralisation of business, hungry stags dying on the Scottish Moors, emaciated fox-hounds, dandelions growing on the nation's golf greens, daddy-long-legs infesting impoverished country houses? Not a bit of it. We know now that all the outcry was mere party hysterical talk, wanton, feckless, craven stupidity. And ever since, practically the whole country has been gambling, plunging, fighting for foreign investments in Newfoundland, in rubber here and rubber everywhere and now it is the same with oil. But why do not the economic professors of the disunionist Unionist party shake their



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heads at this manifest Radical wickedness? Why do they not tell us that it is criminal to buy foreign securities, to invest money abroad, to seek to develop undeveloped lands in the name of Empire and patriotism and the nation's future? Surely it is an unpatriotic thing for the country to plunge in this mad way into rubber, which is a nasty foreign thing, when we might invest our money more charitably in Sir William Richmond's scheme for freeing London of fog, or in the wholesome culture of Irish potatoes? Are not these things economically unsound? Is England not going rapidly, irretrievably, conscientiously to the dogs—in fact, to Java and dreadful tropical places where only black men live, all for the sake of a little rubber? Surely there is but one stay to the nation's affairs now, only one hope of protection and that is—hopeless, as Mr. Balfour, with the genius of Mark Antony, appositely and triumphantly enunciated.

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It was a masterly, a Shakespearean stroke, that of Mr. Balfour, but it is rather like stirring a cup of Turkish coffee. All the sediments of party compromise, tribulation, and stipulation have risen to the surface, and the top is as thick as the bottom. The *Morning Post* is very angry. What will Mr. Chaplin say? What will the farmers say? After all, Protection, if it means anything, signifies Protection. The whole proposal to tax colonial wheat was from its inception inane, a thoroughly uneconomic idea, but if the underlying motive of Mr. Balfour's emendation is that the British farmer will be materially benefited by the free import of colonial wheat, while only foreign wheat is to be taxed, then the latest opportunist party egg that Mr. Balfour has hatched seems foredoomed to addled sterility. The British farmer, "way down Wilts and Norfolk," will not understand the virtue of that proposition. Of course it has immensely enhanced Mr. Balfour's position as leader of the Unionist party. No man now will venture to dispute his unconditional sway over all parties in the House. Mr. President of England, head of the Unionist party and virtual controller, through the Upper House, of the affairs of the country, he stands now at the apex of his career, supreme and sacrosanct.



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But Mr. Balfour's delightful escapade has not been the only comic relief in the situation, for even more droll than that of the ruler of the Empire was the appeal of Lord Rosebery to "drop" Tariff Reform. "See-saw, Marjory Daw!" Mr. Harry Lauder never said word more canty. Somehow or other the seeds must be sown, of course—but to sow the newly ploughed fields with tares, to fill the fresh furrows with the old clothes of scarecrows in the hope of fertilising the land, No, this is not the way to "bury Cæsar" either politically or economically. It is true that Professor Dicey rushed into the furrow, slate in hand, and that Lord Halifax, like the true fighter that he is, drew his scimitar in allegiance. But there the frank offerings ended. The instinct for immolation is hereditary. The pyre is at hand, no doubt, there is fuel to light the fire: there are good Scandinavian matches in the country. But to sacrifice the entire fighting programme of the Unionist party to save a principle which Lord Rosebery for years has been foremost in decrying as iniquitous, this is surely a Pagan performance. Still there it is, presented gratuitously to the party by Lord Rosebery, and there is the other recorded solemnly by Mr. Balfour as a set-off in leadership against it. Lord Rosebery is fully entitled to his opinions. Like Olympian Jupiter he never speaks without sending forth his terrifying thunderbolts, but to ask Tariff Reformers to cross-garter themselves and play Malvolio on the eve of a General Election is really grossly Elizabethan. "Dance my merry men all in a row!" It is a good old rollicking song. But the last line, has it not a stinging relevance?—"Tomkins, he shall dance alone."

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And why does Lord Rosebery advocate the elimination of Tariff Reform from the Unionist programme? Because tariffs are evil and a bad thing for this country? He does not say. We do not know what he thinks about the tariffs. It scarcely seems to concern him. He tells the Unionists to drop the economic side of the question for the constitutional side, to jettison financial reform for the sake of electioneering opportunism, in a word, he counsels the party of the Lords to abjure the credo of



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their whole political and economic policy to fight, as a single issue, the very question which he, himself, has flung into the polling crucible for ending or mending. It is amusing, if not directly stimulating. That the Tariff Reform Press has repudiated the very suggestion is welcome testimony to the sincerity of its convictions. But it leaves things precisely as they were. And it leaves Lord Rosebery more than ever out of practical politics, preaching alone from the cathedra of his own empiricism, deaf, like Beethoven, to his own symphonies.

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These two events with the fun derivable from the Celtic tourney of equivocation and exactitude furnished by Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. O'Brien complete the record of the month's political gaiety. On the other side the balance is heavy. The inevitable has come, for Mr. Asquith has wisely done the right and only thing which was to precipitate and enforce a conflict. Whether he did so at the behest of the Irish or not is purely outside the point. It does not matter in the least what bargain was made with Mr. Redmond or was not made. The whole spirit of Parliamentary procedure is compromise, as the three reasons of State policy are circumstance, conjecture, and conjuncture. When this country is engaged in war we usually have to appoint an Irishman as general in command. All the silly chaff about Mr. Asquith's submission to Mr. Redmond is mere party vapour and recrimination. If the Unionists object, why did they not reduce the Irish representation to its legitimate number when they had the power to do so? To complain of a deal in our Parliamentary life is historically and politically reprehensible. Without deals and bargains and conversations and conclaves—whether at Lansdowne House, at Downing Street or at Westminster—no party in England would ever be able to legislate at all. If Mr. Asquith communed privately with Mr. Redmond, and Mr. Lloyd George communed privately with Mr. O'Brien, they both of them have every right to. Did not Mr. Chamberlain once have an historical conversation with Mr. Balfour? And quite right too. The idea that there is any dishonour in a Minister approaching the leader of a party with a view to an understanding is untenable.



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The real facts of the situation are now apparent to all, and the chief one is the inevitability of a General Election some time in the summer. The issue will be twofold. Tariff Reform will figure just as prominently in the Unionist party propaganda as it did at the last elections, and, *pace* Lord Rosebery and Lord Halifax, the countryfolk will probably be primed with economic statistics in their ale a good deal more than with the abstract problem of what to do with the Lords. In London, men will decide for themselves. The real Lord of the town to-day is the taxi-cab driver with his silence and his uniform and the "chap" who manipulates his car on the rank, but in the country men are not so sophisticated. There the old methods will reap the old rewards. And it is there, in the villages, in the cottages, up hill and down dale, that electioneering efforts must be concentrated.

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The position, as it stands now, is for the polls curiously simple. For the country will be asked to make up its mind on but one new question, which is the plain working of constitutional government. Apart from all party subterfuge and polytechnics, the matter is this. Is the Liberal party, the party, that is, in legitimate opposition to the Conservative party, to have any authority in Parliament at all; or are the affairs of this country to continue to be governed by the Conservative, capitalistic, and propertied classes under the leadership of one man who absolutely controls the Second Chamber? Now that the hereditary principle has been found out, the question is for the country to find Mr. Balfour out; to discover that in his capacity as leader of the Conservative party he really is the ruler—the Mr. President—of the entire political machinery of Great Britain. How many hereditary, how many penal peers—if the guarantee Lords are made—sit in a reformed Upper House is quite immaterial to the principle which is at stake now: no longer that of heritage, which is dead; but of effectiveness, which is essential. It is not so much the composition of the Upper House which causes pain and reflection but the question of that nice adjustment of power which will ensure not only independent judgment and deliberation but, to some recognised extent, fair play to the Liberal party.



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That is the question which has to be placed before the emigrating ploughman of Merry England.

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To the intellectuals the trouble is the Single-Chamber bogey, which in reality is but the bogey of our innate conservatism. For years there has been only One-Chamber Government in this country. For years Mr. Balfour has been able, with a smile, to clog and frustrate all Liberal legislation. Always at his beck and call the Upper House has done precisely what Mr. Balfour desired to be done, and left undone precisely what was to be left undone. To talk, as serious people still do, of the "danger" of a One-Chamber System, of the revolutionary change in our public life that would accrue from a strong Lower House able to enforce its will against the authority of a weak Upper House, is very similar to the kind of terror respectable people entertained of Mr. Bernard Shaw, before he became the fashionable wit and stage entertainer of London. We said much the same thing about motors, before they came in, years after the continental "barbarians" had been using them. Ibsen met with just the same sort of insular prejudice, and, in spite of the rubber boom, so, too, do galoches.

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Now when the Conservative party is in power, the One-Chamber system governs absolutely. What Mr. Balfour proposes, the Lords accept automatically. When the Conservatives have a ten years' lease of Government, the entire Upper House ceases to have either will or conscience. Mr. Balfour's Bills become the nation's laws. But what is this if not One-Chamber Government? No one denies it. If we had to-morrow the most complete Lower-House Single-Chamber Government imaginable the only change would be that what is called representative Government would, in effect, be representative; would, in practice, carry out the theory of its purpose and design; would do what for years, so long and as often as a Liberal Government is in power, it never has had the slightest chance of doing, namely, legislate by virtue of its representation. A more lop-sided, purely party and class rule than our own at present it would



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be difficult to imagine outside a monarchical stratocracy such as Germany or a bureaucratic autocracy such as the Government of Russia.

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It is difficult to understand the mind of the educated man who, in these days of savage competition, materialism, and spiritual iconoclasm, still supports the effete institution of an hereditary class rule. Such a man, if he has read the history of these islands, if he knows anything whatever of the reasons of history which have gone to make England what she is, which rescued France over a century ago from the vampire clutches of a decrepit aristocracy, which, at this moment, are shaking even Oriental despotisms such as Russia, and subterraneously sapping the very class military feudalism of Prussia—such a man, looking round to-day upon the economic growth of America and Germany, upon the educated masses of an ever-increasingly democratic Europe, surely cannot ignore the appeal of the people, which is the cry of the age, for authority and government by merit. Lord Rosebery, who once described the House of Lords as a danger to the Constitution, may now invoke the hysteria of the moneyed classes against the Veto resolutions of the Government, but no man who pauses to think for a moment on the future of this Empire, the cleanest and brightest jewel of Empire that the world has known, can view with equanimity the continuance of a class aristocratic rule in England, when all the world, headed and taught by America, is rapidly sloughing the old skin of privilege for the real qualities of worth and character. It is not fraternity, alas! that is enforcing the doctrines of equality and liberty; it is the natural instinct of self-preservation, the struggle for self-expression, the consciousness of self-assertion consequent on the facilities of modern education and the hideous morality of plutocracy.

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To face the world, England needs no longer the fetish of a class tutorial Parliament. It is not the playing-fields of our public schools that will save England in the hour of trial, but rather the men who have learnt to think. Frederick the Great



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was, no doubt, right in insisting that a class aristocracy made good officers, because as a class they would be hidebound by convention. But to-day it is no longer the "gentlemen" who win battles whether on land, on sea, in art or in commerce, but the brains and the character of plain men: that fact is the crowning achievement and testimony of America. It has brought our classes into trade, our masses into the classes. Within a few years it has practically disbanded, leavened what is called society, and but a few emblems of the old order remain, together with a few titled door-plates still flaunting the feudal privilege, like the glory of old coins. These things are recognised. It is utterly useless to deny them. Rank *qua* rank has fallen concomitantly with Consols. The Peers to-day are the men who have acquired the title, not those who have inherited it. Look where one may, the cerements of the old titular and social order are melting rapidly away before the inroad of democracy and the individual; before quality, which is ousting birthright; before talent, which is ousting privilege; before merit and character, which have destroyed the hereditary principle and the whole conception of class autocracy.

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WHAT is taking place in England to-day is indeed inevitable. It is the issue of a long-pent-up tension which has at last found recognised and public expression. Exactly the same thing is taking place in Germany, only that the conditions there are so different, and the objective is more local. But the principle in both countries is identical. Social Democracy in Germany owes its enormous strength simply to the crass folly and brutality of the *bourgeois* classes; to Bismarck, primarily, who thought to strangle it by mediæval methods of coercion and destruction, and by the Government and the squirearchy ever since, who see in it but the arrogance of presumption. That the aristocracy in this country, and those who work and write for them, do not grasp the change that has come upon the world, as the result of education, industrialism, and capitalism, is a serious sign for England. It shows that they are no longer the leaders of the people, no longer abreast with the thought



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of the times, and they have sunk to the defensive. They fight, not because they know their cause to be right, but because they know their whole economic and hereditary privileged estate to be jeopardised. They have become careless, cynical, overbearing. They are no longer real, because the reality of their privilege is defunct, because they are but the effigies of their illustrious ancestry, like the scarabæi in Egyptian tombs.

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And Mr. Asquith has done the right thing, the inevitable, the only thing. As if for years the question of the Lords has not been the sole issue, as it has been the sole obstacle, to all Liberal achievement and design! As if any other policy than that of shock with the forces of privilege has been open to Liberals for the last twenty years! As if by the incredibly foolish rejection of the Budget, the Lords have not placed themselves in direct opposition to practically the whole enlightened opinion of Great Britain, deliberately with the object of provoking a crisis! To provoke a crisis in order to promote a policy, to promote a policy in order to perpetuate the conditions of their hereditary prerogative. The Irish, in associating themselves with Liberal opposition to the Lords, have been but party to a policy of reform. To allege that they instigated such a policy, that without Mr. Redmond's shillelagh blandishments, Mr. Asquith would never have come to the "sticky" point, is sheer controversial blarney, utterly unworthy of statesmanlike argument and even as a polemical weapon fatuous and splenetic.

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The real fact is that the defenders of the robes are hard put to it. As usual, it is not really the Lords who are leading the party, it is not even the cause of the Lords that the party is fighting for, for the real power of the Unionist party lies with the fighting promoters of Tariff Reform. To these economic enthusiasts the Lords are but an ancillary issue. Not even Lord Rosebery has said unkinder things about the hereditary principle than do these gentlemen, publicly and privately. The



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true, fanatical Tariff Reformer would give you an armful of coronets for twopence on wheat any day. The Lords to him are not inviolate because they are Lords, but simply and solely because they are the sandwich-men who advertise his policy. Now when Bismarck introduced tariffs into Germany, he had the squirearchy interest behind him, because the interest that he was fighting for was mainly agricultural, and the agrarian cause was the pivot of the nation's prosperity. But with us it is not so at all. And now that Mr. Balfour has hypothecated the wheat tariff for an electioneering plank, the agrarian side of Tariff Reform has become more nebulous than ever, for, at any rate, Mr. Chaplin's policy was intelligible and "straight." But to the Tariff Reformer this economic use of Mr. Balfour's "left" is gall and brimstone indeed. The tariff man supported the privilege of the Lords, because as a very wealthy class in actual possession of a very considerable portion of the land of these islands they do stand for a very actual power and, as such, they command his respect and support, just as capital commands interest. But the fight between the Lords and the Commons is in no real sense his. It is rather an excrescence upon the issue; it is not an economic argument.

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All these bickerings and waverings materially complicate the situation. Then there are the Unionist Free Traders, like the blind hermit crabs crawling about on the bottom of the deep seas, these who, neither led nor leading, grope pathetically for inspiration, and these people are almost as much anathema to Tariff Reformers as are the reckless Radicals themselves. "Every laddie has a lassie," but not every Tariff Reformer has a Unionist vote. What the true Tariff Reformer, the man who wants to increase the price of the necessary commodities of life in order to cement the Empire into a Tariff Ring hostile to other countries, what he hoped was that the Liberal party would not make the House of Lords question a single, electioneering issue, but would confound it with a series of radical, individualistic "little English" irrelevancies such as harm no one in particular, but do an immense amount of harm to



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Liberalism at the polls, when hot air is so much more effective than "Grandpa" Smallweed's philosophy. As every soldier in the German army is now furnished with a little spade to build up a small cover to conceal his whereabouts, so every Tariff Reformer is an enlightened exponent of propagandist spade-work. While Liberals were gaily chatting to the people about the constitutional nicety of the Lords *versus* the Commons, the Tariff Reformers—supported by motors, the ladies, paid agents, and the country gentry—were to set about throwing up fortifications, blockhouses, trenches, ramparts, pitfalls, and mouse-traps all over the country in a way that the farmer, the agricultural labourer, and the local shopkeeper, who lives on the gentry, would easily grasp and respond to. And it is this little trouble, this false estimate of Mr. Asquith's initiative, which has brought consternation into the luck of the roaring camp and caused Mr. Balfour to present it with a supposititious infant in the shape of a little wheaten cajoler.

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UNKIND? Not in the least. Unfair? Why so? It is only the nostrum of party politics. Why worry about principle and first causes when effect and advantage are at stake? A tariff can be thrown down as easily as it can be cast up. After all, the cast is the thing, as it is in fly-fishing. The bait? A worm will catch an eel, a sprat a dolphin, a wooden leg a septuagenarian shark. It is the twinkle that catches, not the hook on which the twinkle is affixed. And it really was an astonishingly silly affair to tell the public to tax themselves. The ignorant talk about German black bread is seraphic compared to the food-tax proposals. If you can hypnotise a cobra with a pipe, you cannot tame him by sitting on his tail, and the public has a very curious way of sitting up on its foundations at times, a characteristic which no man knows better how to gauge and to prescribe for than the genial leader of the Unionist party.

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"PERPEND," he says, and all England bows to his urbanity. The snapping turtles of the party feel doubtless very tired and ill-



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used. What with Lord Rosebery who bids them "drop" it, and Mr. Balfour who bids them halve it, the game must be played for a very long candle to be worth the trouble and the expense, the vexation and the disappointment, but then that is exactly what the Liberals have to appreciate, and with appreciation to combat and defeat. The game to them is worth a long candle, and they have lit it up and down the country. He will be a simple fellow who thinks that because Mr. Balfour has discarded wheat therefore Tariff Reformers will discard their policy. It is only a new bait that has been cast into the deep waters :

Twinkle, twinkle, little bait,
How I wonder at your fate!

That the metaphysician should turn metapolitician is quite normal in the circumstances, which are sadly strained and abnormal. But the tendency among Liberals to sup with the lemurs is surely as unwarranted as it is undesirable. Battles are often lost at the very moment of victory. Causes are often won when they are most despaired of. It is quite as much a general's quality to know when he is defeated as to recognise the turn of victory. The cause of Liberalism against the Lords is in somewhat like case to-day, yet probably never with less reason.

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The hereditary principle is dead beyond all mortal resuscitation. Practically the Veto on finance is an accepted axiom of any party which seriously solicits the suffrage of the country, and as the Lords are now expected to accept the Budget—Mr. Lloyd George's constabulary pestle—that litigious portion of the controversy may be exscinded from further consideration. The Tariff Reform aspect of the question remains, and the elections will be fought as much upon that issue as upon that of the Lords, which, being a matter not representable to the people as directly affecting their pockets, cannot be expected, under our present system of *cafard* electioneering methods, to carry with it the sweeping wave of enthusiasm of true revolutionary reform. But there will be no contango issues, and, above all, no "Little Englandry." This time the flag will be unfurled proudly. The



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Chancellor has vindicated his Budget. The Budget will have been vindicated by the Lords. Our dear lady friends will not be able to go about shaking their heads at the exodus of English capital abroad, for most of them have put what they had in foreign oil and rubber, and made a "little bit" on the transaction, so that, allowing for adventitious incident and the customary "mad dog" business incidental to all elections, the thing should be a fairly straight fight with but two plain issues, which are the Lords and Tariff Reform.

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If the Crown is brought into the *mêlée*, it will be the direct fault of the Opposition. The Liberal party is not fighting an anti-monarchical, a revolutionary cause at all, but a peaceful and social reformatory one. To drag the King into the struggle, as the Navy was dragged in at the last elections, would constitute a truly flagitious perfidy, but the Liberals must be fully prepared for it, and to expose, if necessary, its duplicity. Desperate words will be said without doubt. Hothouse Socialism will be rammed down the people's throats. The Lords will be held up, as the priests in Russia hold up the ikons on holidays to the people to be blessed, and, very likely, there will be an emigration "scare," or perhaps Lord Milner will discover that Mr. Haldane was educated in Germany. But, in the main, the issue is clear enough, and it will probably be decided quietly by the people long before the orators and the party bombardiers get out with their feudal lansquenets on the hustings.



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# Mr. Roosevelt

By Sydney Brooks

No American of our times has touched the imagination of Europe in anything like the same degree as Mr. Roosevelt. The type of President and of statesman evolved by the monstrous mechanism of American politics may have many virtues; but the virtue of attracting and interesting foreigners is not among them. Only one American President in the whole course of the nineteenth century reached the level of real greatness. That nation, no doubt, is to be congratulated which can produce, even once in a hundred years, an Abraham Lincoln; and there is possibly a quality of artistic finish in the mere flatness that directs and concentrates one's gaze on the nobility of that lonely, towering figure. But the flatness itself is undeniable. The Madisons, Monroes, Jacksons, Van Burens, Tylers, Polks, Taylors, Fillmores, Pierces, and Buchanans of the pre-Lincoln period, the Garfields, Arthurs, Clevelands, Harrisons, and McKinleys of our own generation, what possible meaning or message have they, or could they ever have had, for the non-American world? Who would even remember their very names apart from the great office they so inexplicably filled? A succession of provincial and uninspiring mediocrities, singularly deficient in the graces either of accomplishment or personality, elected in a tumult of partisan ardour, spending most of their Presidential term in furious factional fights, and forgotten or at any rate shelved by their countrymen the moment they quitted the White House—such have been the characteristics and the destiny of eight American Presidents out of every ten.

But in Mr. Roosevelt's case matters from the outset took a very different turn. He was known both to America and to Europe before he became President, but the dramatic circum-



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stances of his accession to the chief magistracy, the resounding vigour with which he discharged its duties, the breadth of the policies he formulated, and the evidence furnished by his every deed and word that a real leader of men had arisen beyond the Atlantic, quickly made him one of the most prominent and spectacular figures on the stage of *Welt-politik*. In England the force of his attractiveness was especially felt. He belongs by education, birth, and tastes to the type that Englishmen on the whole most like to represent them in the public life of the nation—a type that in America used to be moderately common sixty or seventy years ago, before the coming of the Boss, and when merit in a Presidential candidate was considered of more importance than "availability." Long before he became President we knew of him as a mighty hunter and a good all-round sportsman. We watched him in Cuba doing all the brilliant, reckless, and quixotic things that attract the applause of the populace. We watched him again in the Governorship of New York State, bending the "machine" to his will with consummate ability and courage. We knew that he was a 'Varsity man, with a good lineage behind him, a gentleman both in the right and in the technical sense, and a man of independent means. We felt, in short, an affinity with Mr. Roosevelt, an affinity we have felt with not more than two or three American politicians in the past thirty years. It is curious, considering the many points of resemblance in the social and political structure of the two peoples, how rarely one can conceive a man of prominence in English affairs rising to equal prominence in American affairs, or a successful politician in America proving equally successful under British conditions. Such cases do occur from time to time but only very occasionally. One could easily, for instance, have imagined Mr. Chamberlain becoming an American Boss of the first magnitude and climbing by a series of dexterously rigged Conventions to the Presidency itself. Mr. Root, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, and Mr. Choate are similar examples from the other side. One could picture them transplanting themselves to England and taking an effective part in English public life just as they are and without finding its atmosphere oppressively uncongenial. But in general neither Englishmen nor Americans



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feel any temptation to annex each other's statesmen. Mr. Roosevelt, however, in this as in most ways is a signal exception. Every nation would be glad to reckon him among its assets if it could. At the bottom of the extraordinary enthusiasm of the welcome that has everywhere greeted him on the Continent, a welcome that will reach its culmination when he lands in England, is the consciousness that every country in Europe needs a Roosevelt of its own. "If only we had some one like him!" is the thought behind the attentions that have been showered upon him. And the thought is echoed nowhere more responsively than in England. People here feel that they would know what to do with Mr. Roosevelt, and I dare say Mr. Roosevelt feels he would know what to do with them. If he were an Englishman, he would have explored every inch of the Empire, shot all the big game to be found in it, won his Blue at Oxford or Cambridge, kept a pack of hounds, written some slashing books on Wellington and Nelson and the heroes of the Indian Mutiny, captured De Wet, annexed an Empire or two, and left an indelible mark on the politics of the nation as the Premier of a Progressive Conservative Ministry. As it is we have to roll half a dozen Englishmen together to get Mr. Roosevelt's full measure. Take Mr. F. C. Selous, the big-game hunter, add Dr. Fitchett, the semi-historian, add again the breeziness of Lord Charles Beresford, who might be at least half a Roosevelt himself if he were not an Irishman, add again Lord Curzon's instinct for domination and his superb self-confidence, mingle with something more than a dash of Lord Kitchener's remorseless efficiency, throw in at least as much decisiveness, practicality, and belligerency as Mr. Chamberlain has ever commanded, and, finally, leaven the resultant with an ardour Gladstonian in its intensity—and you have a combination not by any means unlike the ex-President.

It sounds paradoxical to assert, after this, that Mr. Roosevelt is in many respects an ordinary man. Yet such at bottom is the fact. He is a man of ordinary endowments extraordinarily developed. So far from being a genius he is a proof of how little genius has to do with an infinite capacity for taking pains. I remember some four years ago when I was spending an hour with him in the White House the conversation turned for a



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moment on this very point. Some New York journal of hypercritical bent had been complaining that he was not a genius. "I know I am not a genius," rapped out the President; and then, turning squarely towards me, he asked, "By-the-by, wasn't it you, or was it some other Englishman, who said that a pork-butcher could understand me?" It was a wholesomely embarrassing moment. My mind travelled backwards over the various indiscretions I had been guilty of, the innumerable things I might have said differently, in the course of twelve years of writing on American politics and politicians. It lighted finally on some such dictum. I owned up. "Because," said the President, "I want to tell you you were absolutely right!" Well, I am not quite sure to-day that I was so "absolutely right" as Mr. Roosevelt believed. I have rather worked round to the conclusion that Mr. Roosevelt is slightly more complex than he is aware of and that it needs a somewhat more elastic kind of mind than one usually associates with a pork-butcher to understand him thoroughly. But the characterisation had perhaps this amount of truth in it, that Mr. Roosevelt being fundamentally a healthily unoriginal and elementary man, direct in all his actions, in his character and instincts, and particularly in his mental processes, the simplest and most obvious explanation of him is all but invariably the right one.

The ex-President himself holds firmly and sincerely to the notion that he is essentially a commonplace person, and that almost anybody who chose could be what he is and do what he has done. In a letter which has not, I think, been published in England, he elaborated this theory with ingenuous force. He was dealing more particularly with his achievements as a sportsman. "Personally, as you know," he wrote, "I am not really good at any games. Perhaps in my time I came nearer to being fairly good as a walker, rider, and rifle-shot than in any other way; but I was never more than an average good man even in these three respects. Whatever success I have had in game-hunting—and it has been by no means noteworthy—has been due, as well as I can make out, to three causes: first, common sense and good judgment; second, perseverance, which is the only way of allowing one to make good one's own blunders;



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third, the fact that I shot as well at game as at a target. . . . Now, of course, the possession and practice of these three qualities did not make me by any means as successful a hunter as the men who, in addition to possessing them, were also better shots than I was, or who had greater power of endurance, or who were more skilled in plainscraft and woodcraft. But they did enable me to kill a reasonable quantity of big game and to do it in ways that have made my observations of value to the faunal or outdoor naturalist. Besides, I knew what I wanted, and was willing to work hard to get it. In short, I am not an athlete ; I am simply a good, ordinary, out-of-doors man. You speak of my recent hundred-mile ride. Now this was no feat for any young man in condition to regard as worth speaking about ; twice out in the cattle-country, on the round-up, when I was young, I have myself spent thirty-six hours in the saddle, merely dismounting to eat or change horses ; the hundred-mile ride represented what any elderly man in fair trim can do if he chooses. In the summer I often take the smaller boys for what they call a night picnic on the Sound ; we row off eight or ten miles, camp out, and row back in the morning. Each of us has a light blanket to sleep in, and the boys are sufficiently deluded to believe that the chicken or beefsteak I fry in bacon fat on these expeditions has a flavour impossible elsewhere to be obtained. Now these expeditions represent just about the kind of thing I do. Instead of rowing, it may be riding, or chopping, or walking, or playing tennis, or shooting at a target. But it is always a pastime which any healthy middle-aged man fond of outdoor life, but not an athlete, can indulge in if he chooses."

All this, as it stands, is sufficiently revealing, but Mr. Roosevelt went on, as he usually does, to place the interpretation of it beyond dispute. "I think," he said, "my last sentence covers the whole case—that is, when I say 'if he chooses.' It has always seemed to me that in life there are two ways of achieving success, or, for the matter of that, of achieving what is commonly called greatness. One is to do that which can only be done by the man of exceptional and extraordinary abilities. Of course this means that only this one man can do it, and it is a very rare kind of success or of greatness. The other is to do that which



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many men could do, but which, as a matter of fact, none of them actually does. This is the ordinary kind of success or kind of greatness. Nobody but one of the world's rare geniuses could have written the Gettysburg speech, or the Second Inaugural, or met as Lincoln met the awful crises of the Civil War. But most of us can do the ordinary things, which, however, most of us do *not* do. My own successes have come within this second category. Any fairly hardy and healthy man can do what I have done in hunting and ranching if he only really wishes to, and will take the pains and trouble, and at the same time use common sense. Any one that chose could lead the kind of life I have led, and any one who had led that life could if he chose—and by 'choosing,' I mean, of course, choosing to exercise in advance the requisite industry, judgment, and foresight, none of them to an extraordinary degree—have raised my regiment or served in positions analogous to those in which I have served in civil life."

Mr. Roosevelt, in a word, has done what so few of us are at pains to do—he has made the most and the best of himself. Hardly anything is more humiliating for the average man than to contemplate the many points at which he has permitted himself to lose touch with life, the powers and faculties he has allowed to become atrophied, the manifold interests and avocations he has dabbled in and then laid aside, the learning he might so easily have amassed, the instincts and aptitudes he has neglected to cultivate. No doubt Mr. Roosevelt in the watches of the night can charge himself, like the rest of us, with many such sins of omission and commission; but to the onlooking eye they seem amazingly few and trivial. More than any man I have ever encountered or ever expect to encounter he has developed his tastes and capacities harmoniously and continuously, never letting go when he had once taken hold, always adding something to his stock of knowledge and experience, fronting the problems and events of each day with an eager, acquisitive, and impetuous mind, pouring himself with a perpetually fresh and gathered vehemence into the theme of the moment, not ceasing to be a wide reader because he had become President or sinking the naturalist in the soldier or allowing the official to shoulder out



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the sportsman or sacrificing the man of letters to the politician, but preserving along the whole frontier of his nature a just and progressive balance. It is not in itself remarkable that a man, even one whose working day since he left college can hardly have averaged less than fifteen or sixteen hours, should have kept up his classics and his French and German. It is not remarkable that a statesman holding high office and dedicated to "the strenuous life" should turn aside and devote his odd moments of comparative leisure to writing a Life of Cromwell. It is not remarkable that a veteran big-game hunter should be a diligent and observant naturalist, able at any moment to compare the relative sizes of European and American mammals and to give his reasons for exalting the song of the hermit-thrush above that of the nightingale. It is not remarkable that a man should be a first-class rider, walker, and rifle-shot, and able also to hold his own at wrestling, on the tennis court, with the foils, and as a boxer. What is remarkable is that these various interests, accomplishments, and aptitudes should meet in a single individual and that each should contribute to the sum-total of his life its proper, and no more than its proper, quota.

By its proper quota I mean the quota that a rational man would assign to it. The torrential vigour which Mr. Roosevelt throws into all his pursuits is one of his most obvious characteristics; but hardly less obvious is his insistence that activity must be regulated by reason, by proportion, by a sense of what is feasible. There is no type that irritates him more, no type he has "scored" so mercilessly, as the men of impossible standards and extravagant ideals. The intemperance that overshoots the mark is as intolerable to him as the indifference that does not even trouble to aim, and misguided effort all but as abhorrent as no effort at all. Indeed, I am not sure that the over-civilised, hypercritical mugwump does not rouse him more effectually than even the *jeunesse dorée*. The choicest adjectives of his vocabulary, a vocabulary which if it lacks range and subtlety possesses an undeniable sledge-hammery effectiveness, have been reserved, not for the wealthy criminal class, but for the arm-chair critics, the "vain prattlers" and "professional impracticables" who think they can reform politics without themselves becoming politicians, the



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men of good intentions, weak wills, and amiably aimless action. Mr. Roosevelt profoundly believes in preserving the rugged fighting qualities in a man or a nation. He is not afraid to go on record with the statement that a righteous war is the healthiest of all national exercises. He is never tired of extolling the "manly virtues" and of insisting on physical hardihood and courage as one of the essential elements of a sound character. When he reaches England and looks round upon the many agitations of our public and social life I doubt whether he will find anything to appeal to him more directly than the Boy Scout movement, with its admirably wholesome and ingenious ways of developing every virtue and faculty that a boy possesses, of teaching him patriotism and chivalry, of sharpening his powers of observation and deduction, of training him to a life of vigour and cleanliness, and of turning him into an efficient, handy, all-round member of society. With the robust ideals of such a movement he would feel an instantaneous sympathy. "Get out and do things" has been his constant exhortation to the youth of America. But while vehement on the necessity of action as the touchstone of sincerity, he is always careful to add that it must be action in union with judgment. The "Reformers" who think it enough to reiterate the honesty of their intentions, the men who will not admit that compromise is the essence of politics, for all such people he has a contempt only less hearty than for those who refuse to support a big Navy or who turn against their country in time of war. Large families, "My country, right or wrong," personal courage, everybody shouldering the public duties which almost everybody neglects, all classes and interests recognising their interdependence, the supremacy of the elementary virtues of character over all intellectual and material gifts—it is on such themes as these that Mr. Roosevelt has held forth with inimitable gusto.

His own temperament, though quickly and easily stirred, is essentially Whiggish, content to advance a step at a time, inexorable on vital points, but never tempted to extremes. One could hazard the man from his books or his books from the man. His prose has a hard, confident, metallic texture, with little light or shade playing about it, yet strong in its rush and resonance. I



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find I cannot with any pleasure read much of it at a time, unless it happens to deal with hunting and outdoor life. One soon exhausts the quality of Mr. Roosevelt's intellectual power. The most individual of men, he is also one of the least original. In all his books and Presidential messages I cannot recall a single thought that was really novel and illuminating. On the other hand, I can only recall two or three that were absolutely foolish. A dogmatic turn for the common sense of things is the most marked characteristic of his mind. He is eminently sane but it would be flattery to call him deep. He thinks too much in rigid categories and antitheses and expresses himself too much in superlatives to be a winning writer or a subtle thinker. One might perhaps best describe his mind and style by saying that they are as far apart as anything could be from Newman's mind and style. As a talker, copious, ready, animated, and humane, he is far more enthralling than as an essayist or an historian. One is too conscious in reading him of the whirr of the " big stick." He moves swiftly and resonantly down the road of clanking commonplace. His mind tolerates no haziness ; for him there is a right and a wrong in everything ; and he tries too openly to bludgeon his readers into accepting his views. One is not always able to do so. One cannot always agree that the problems of life and politics are quite so clear-edged as Mr. Roosevelt makes them out to be, or that the alternatives he so vividly propounds are altogether exhaustive. Nor can one always bear patiently with his eternal insistence on the eternal verities or listen without something perilously near a yawn while he thumps the cushions of his political pulpit, enunciates the moral platitudes that most people are content to take for granted, and holds forth on wife-beating, race suicide, the obligations of citizenship, the simple life, snobbishness, and kindred topics in a manner thoroughly sound, no doubt, and estimable but also a trifle wearying.

But the man, after all, is greater than his books. " Right thou feelest, rush to do," was Emerson's formula for " freedom's secret." It is Mr. Roosevelt's too, but less dangerous in him than in most men because of his background of solid Dutch caution and level-headedness. Mere feelings are as little his guide as mere theories. People call him impulsive. It is the



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charge usually brought by stupidity against the man of quick-moving parts. Mr. Roosevelt makes up his mind at a bound, and the bound, no doubt, is sometimes a hasty one. Being always ruled by what is possible he cares not a rap for consistency, and it is easy to imagine him asserting a proposition with almost ferocious emphasis to-day and retracting or contradicting it to-morrow with equal vehemence. But impulsive in his actions he decidedly is not; and the critics who have charged him from time to time with over-precipitancy have always found that he looked further ahead than they. Practicality and idealism hold in his nature an almost perfect balance. There is nothing more fundamental in him than his transparent incapacity for anything mean, underhand, or equivocal. His instincts are all towards whatever is sound, honest, and clean. But if his head strikes the stars his feet are on the solid earth. Always reaching, struggling, sometimes rushing forwards, he invariably also keeps in touch with the expediencies, fights furiously for the absolute best, but when he cannot get it, is satisfied with the second best. A score of times he has risked his whole political future rather than yield where he felt yielding to be wrong. Like Mr. Gladstone he is always inflexibly resolved to do the right thing. Like Mr. Gladstone, too, his critics assert that the right thing, by some happy and unvarying chance, is whatever he has resolved to do.

"Better be a poor fisherman than meddle with the governing of men," wailed Danton. Such a dictum would be incomprehensible to Mr. Roosevelt. His attitude towards "the governing of men" is that of a strong man rejoicing. Leadership with him is an instinct and the hurly-burly of conflict a great gladness; and this stern elation, this personal and irrepressible joy in work, was the driving-power of his whole Presidency. He had seven and a half years of more struggle and contention than fall to most men in a life-time; and he revelled in every fighting minute of them. In a phrase that is already classic, but not yet classical, he announced when he left the White House that he had had "a perfectly corking time." Both the sentiment and the language came straight from the heart. "I *like* being President," he once said to me with a snap of his emphatic jaw. I happened to be in Washington during one of the most critical crises of his Presi-



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dency, at a time when he was being badgered and thwarted almost beyond mortal endurance, when schemes on which his whole heart was set were in momentary peril of wreckage. I heard him on that occasion explode with anger, scorn, and denunciation, belabour his opponents with more than Wellingtonian vigour, and stoke the fires of dissension with reckless audacity. But one could see with half an eye that the outburst was not one of despair but of exhilaration, that it was tonic to him to be in the middle of the fight and hitting his hardest, and that his vehemence, far from arguing weariness or discouragement, was just the natural, pugnacious, elemental man with his back to the wall. Mr. Roosevelt has always been not only belligerent in himself but the cause of belligerency in others. He often, as President, said things which I do not suppose he would justify in cold blood, if indeed his blood is ever cold. He often acted with too little thought for dignity and appearances. He often engaged in personal squabbles that he might better have avoided and accumulated enmities that added much, no doubt, to his own enjoyment and to the gaiety of the nation but did little permanent good to anybody. Tactfulness, patience, the smaller arts of conciliating and managing men, have never quite consorted with his insistent, dictatorial, almost hectoring temperament, his headlong mind, and the presence in him of a self-confidence so overpowering that it is all but impossible for him to do justice to "the other fellow."

But these, after all, are insignificant blemishes on a Presidency which next to Lincoln's stands out as the most memorable in American history. Mr. Roosevelt's reign was prolific of positive achievements, but his best work was work that could not be tabulated. Burke talks somewhere of "a revolution in sentiment, manners, and moral opinions—the most important of all revolutions." It was such a revolution that Mr. Roosevelt wrought. He has affected the instinctive attitude of his countrymen towards life and conduct. Thanks to him, Americans do not do the things they did. They do not even think the thoughts of a decade ago. He has broadened the social conscience of the people; he has altered the current of their ideas. It is, in the end, as a sort of whirlwind of purification that one thinks of him.



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# Remedies for Parliamentary Deadlock

By Alfred Mond, M.P.

In all bicameral systems, whatever the composition and constitutional powers of the two Chambers may be, it is essential to provide some means of disposing of disagreements arising between them. The Constitutions of many countries provide such means, which are to a great extent lacking in our so-called "unwritten," but in reality merely uncodified and incomplete, Constitution. For this reason a short account, largely based on Parliamentary papers, of the methods adopted by other States with widely different Constitutions conferring different powers and representing populations with very divergent political traditions and temperaments, can hardly fail to be at least suggestive.

The necessity for some less haphazard method, or absence of method, than that with which England has been content up to the present has become increasingly manifest since the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. Although the divergence of views between the two Houses of Parliament was manifest at a far earlier date its extent has become more apparent in the new era inaugurated by that great reform. Under its influence the House of Commons began to assume a political individuality and independence which it was impossible for it to attain while filled mainly with nominees of the hereditary peers in the Upper Chamber. For a long period after the Reform Bill, however, the great territorial magnates still exercised sufficient influence to affect very considerably the composition of the House of Commons. This tended to maintain a certain harmony between the political feeling of the two Houses even in the heat of political struggles. While this harmonising influence naturally declined as years went on and new forces manifested themselves, the gulf between the two Chambers was further deepened by



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the more rapid and widespread development of democratic sentiment.

This increasing antagonism between the two Chambers was accentuated in 1886 by the split among the Liberals which led some of the most influential members of the House of Lords to sever their traditional connection with the party. The growth of this tension has been masked and retarded by the long periods of Conservative administration, during which our Parliament was practically worked as a single-Chamber system, and by the considerable political sagacity of the older leaders of the House of Lords, who succeeded for a time in mitigating the old agitation against its pretensions, of which the present outburst is simply a recrudescence in a somewhat more violent form.

The logic of facts must, however, in the long run prove too strong for even the most adroit of political strategists. The new wine of modern democratic thought cannot for ever be poured into old bottles—and how old, not to say antiquated, our bottle is, becomes evident when the House of Lords is compared even with the most backward of other Upper Chambers. Indeed, its own attitude now shows that it has lost faith in the possibility of maintaining its privileges, while that of the Opposition Press proves that considerable progress has been made even among Conservatives towards the acceptance of some kind of reform. The most ardent defenders of that "ancient monument," as Mr. Joseph Chamberlain styled it a quarter of a century ago, no longer venture to champion it in the full-blooded confident fashion of 1888, for instance, when they contemptuously rejected the very moderate proposals of Lord Rosebery and Lord Dunraven. At that time the very utmost they were prepared to accept was the Marquis of Salisbury's suggested addition of fifty life peerages to distinguished public servants and others. Characteristically enough that dash of incompletely "ennobled" blood with which the hereditary system was to be refreshed was by statute to be accorded no higher rank than that of Baron.

We have at least got past this stage, as also beyond the real or affected horror of election—as something derogatory to the dignity and independence of peers—a dignity as tremulously susceptible in the creation of yesterday as among the earls, who,



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with the bishops, represent the oldest element in the peerage, and are living testimonies to its former official character. Contemporary peers have themselves, by their appeals for the suffrages of the people, effectively disposed of the idea that election, even to such modern and popular bodies as county councils, detracts from their dignity or independence.

Two characteristic features of the House of Lords, which tend to accentuate its estrangement from popular sentiment, render the want of any effective means of disposing of its disagreements with the House of Commons all the more conspicuous. One is its excessive size, which subjects it to the incursions of "Backwoodsmen" lacking political experience and intractable to discipline, the effects of which no party leader can calculate or control. Indeed, the most important of the other Upper Chambers of the world have little more than half the membership of the British House of Lords. According to the last Return (March 8, 1910) it musters a total of 622 members as compared with the 670 of the House of Commons—a practical numeric equality which precludes the possibility of overcoming a deadlock between the two Houses by a joint vote. In other countries a decided numeric preponderance on the part of the Lower Chamber is the rule. The second feature is its almost exclusively hereditary character. Elsewhere, including certain countries with no great reputation for progressive ideas, there has been a tendency to qualify the hereditary principle by a strong infusion of life peers.

It may be mentioned that this category of non-elective Upper Chambers, in which the House of Lords enjoys an unrepresentative pre-eminence, constitutes but about one-tenth of all the world's Senates, while the wholly elective Chambers amount to more than two-thirds and the partially elective to one-fifth.

The mere fact of the Upper House being subject to election of itself reduces the risk of irreconcilable divergence of views between it and the Lower House; while the danger of a long-continued deadlock or blocking of popular reforms is further diminished by the periodical renewal of a third of the Upper Chamber, as is the case in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United States.



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Out of the seventeen foreign States reported on by the British diplomatic representatives in 1907, ten have provided methods for averting or overcoming a deadlock between the two Chambers. In three (Sweden, Norway, and Würtemberg) the two Chambers vote together on the matter in dispute. The system of Joint Committees prevails in seven, viz., the United States of America, France, Austria, Spain, Switzerland, Denmark, and Baden.

Of these countries, the most important for the present purpose are, unquestionably, the United States and France. In the former the Joint-Committee system is reported to work well on the whole, but in a manner that has greatly strengthened the power of the Senate. In France, where more or less serious conflicts between the two Chambers are of frequent occurrence, the system is far less effective, this being due doubtless to the as yet unsolved question which of the two Chambers is the predominant partner.

The Constitution of the United States contains no provision to meet cases of disagreement between the Senate and the House of Representatives, but the practice of Congress is to settle differences by Conferences between members representing the two Houses. In such cases each appoints three of its members, and these six constitute a Conference Committee. Should the committee fail to agree, another conference is usually arranged; should it reach an agreement, a report is drawn up, which is presented by the conference to their respective Houses. The Committee's Report, which generally takes the form of a compromise, is then discussed by each House, and may be either approved or rejected, but not amended. Continued disagreement leads to the extinction of the measure at the end of the Congress.

Constitutional disputes are avoided by the fact that the interpretation of the Constitution lies with the Supreme Court of the United States as final arbiter.

In France neither House is under any obligation to appoint a Joint Committee to confer with the other, while the Government and the Majority in the Chamber of Deputies cannot, without the consent of the Senate, have recourse to an appeal to the country as a means of overcoming a deadlock.



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The procedure relating to the joint conferences is that in case of inacceptable amendments by the other Chamber, the House in which the Bill originated may appoint a Committee to confer with a Committee of the other House in order to agree upon a text. If an agreement be come to, the Chambers consider the new text. But in case one refuses to accept the proposal for a conference, or the Joint Committees fail to agree, the Bill cannot be again considered, except on the initiative of the Government, until two months have elapsed.

In Norway, which strictly speaking has rather a permanent revising committee elected from among the members of the single Chamber than a real Upper House, it is provided that in case of difference between this Committee and the rest of the Chamber both vote together on the matter in dispute, which is decided by a two-thirds majority of all the members.

In cases of difference between the two absolutely equal Chambers or Councils, which when they sit together constitute the Swiss Federal Council, the point at issue is submitted to a conference of numerically equal Committees of both Chambers. If the Conference fails to arrive at a compromise or if the two Chambers cannot agree, the project is considered to be rejected, and can only be again taken into consideration by having recourse to the forms laid down by Statute for fresh legislation. In this country the referendum constitutes a further guarantee against the possibility of a deadlock.

Nowhere have the inherent difficulties of the bicameral system been felt more keenly than in Australia, a fact to which the elaborate precautions against a deadlock in the Commonwealth Constitution are generally attributed. In Victoria, for instance, there have been a number of deadlocks since the sixties, each of which constituted a serious disturbance of the machinery of the State. Curiously enough they turned on several occasions upon alleged "tacking" to Finance Bills by the Lower House. One of the latest difficulties in this colony has arisen through the action of the Upper Chamber in throwing out a land tax. In New South Wales a deadlock arose between the Upper House, which is nominated, and the elective Chamber within about five years of the establishment of the Constitution.



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In some instances Australian Governors sided with their responsible Ministers against the Upper Chamber, contrary to the views entertained at the time by the Colonial Office. Some Governors were, indeed, recalled on account of the attitude they had assumed, but it is considered by Australians that action of this kind would not now be tolerated, if the Colonial Office of the present day were so ill-advised as to attempt it.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that quite exceptional care should have been taken in drafting the Constitution of the Commonwealth, a work which extended over ten years (1890–1900). During this time it was discussed by nearly half a dozen conferences or conventions, one of which in 1897 agreed upon a draft, which was further submitted to and amended by the different Colonial Legislatures, and eventually voted upon by a plebiscite in each colony.

This labour has evidently not been lost in view of the fact that the main lines of the Commonwealth Constitution have been adopted first in the Constitutions granted by Letters Patent to the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies in 1906 and 1907, and by Act of Parliament in 1909 to the Union of South Africa. Indeed, Mr. Bryce characterises the Commonwealth Constitution as the quintessence of the world's experience up to the date of its creation, adding that "it embodies an experiment full of instruction for the future." "The statesmen of the Convention which framed this latest addition to the world's stock of instruments of government had," he says, "passed in review all previous experiments, had found in them examples to follow and other examples to shun, had drawn from them the best essence of the teachings they were fitted to impart. When the Convention prepared its highly finished scheme of polity, it delivered its judgment upon the work of all who had gone before, while contributing to the materials which will be available for all who come hereafter to the work of building up a State."

Notwithstanding this high praise, some of us may venture to think it still possible to improve the section providing for cases of disagreement between the two Chambers, which, by the way, covers financial questions also. The procedure is simplified and rendered less onerous to the Chambers, as well as more expedi-



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tious, in the Constitution of the Union of South Africa, drafted in London, which was evidently modelled upon it.

The Constitution of the Commonwealth provides that if the Senate rejects or makes unacceptable amendments in a Bill passed by the House of Representatives, and if that Bill is again passed after an interval of three months in the same or subsequent session, and is again rejected or amended by the Senate, the Governor-General may dissolve both Chambers simultaneously. If the House of Representatives, after such dissolution, again passes the Bill and the Senate again rejects or amends it, the Governor-General may convene a joint sitting of the two Chambers at which they may deliberate and shall vote, the decision being by an absolute majority of the members of the two Chambers.*

A circumstance which further tends to prevent deadlocks is that the Upper Chamber of the Commonwealth is composed exclusively of Senators directly chosen by the people of each State, voting as one electorate, and serving only for a term of six

* It will be well to give the full text of this section:

"57. If the House of Representatives passes any proposed law and the Senate rejects or fails to pass it, or passes it with amendments to which the House of Representatives will not agree, and if after an interval of three months the House of Representatives, in the same or the next session, again passes the proposed law with or without any amendments which have been made, suggested or agreed to by the Senate, and the Senate rejects or fails to pass it, or passes it with amendments to which the House of Representatives will not agree, the Governor-General may dissolve the Senate and the House of Representatives simultaneously. But such dissolution shall not take place within six months before the date of the expiry of the House of Representatives by effluxion of time.

"If after such dissolution the House of Representatives again passes the proposed law with or without any amendments which have been made, suggested or agreed to by the Senate, and the Senate rejects or fails to pass it, or passes it with amendments to which the House of Representatives will not agree, the Governor-General may convene a joint sitting of the members of the Senate and of the House of Representatives.

"The members present at the joint sitting may deliberate and shall vote together upon the proposed law as last proposed by the House of Representatives, and upon amendments, if any, which have been made therein by one House and not agreed to by the other, and any such amendments which are affirmed by an absolute majority of the total number of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives shall be taken to have been carried, and if the proposed law, with the amendments, if any, so carried is affirmed by an absolute majority of the total number of the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives, it shall be taken to have been duly passed by both Houses of the Parliament, and shall be presented to the Governor-General for the Queen's assent."



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years. There is, besides, no difference between the qualifications of Senators and Members of the House of Representatives nor between those of the voters who elect them, nor is there any property qualification for members of either Chamber. Another feature of the Commonwealth Legislature, as of all the Australian Parliaments, which helps to avert conflicts, is that the Upper House is much smaller than the Lower. Indeed, the Constitution of the Commonwealth expressly provides that the number of members of the House of Representatives must be, as nearly as possible, double that of the Senate. The following table shows the number of members of both Houses in all the Australian Parliaments :

| Members in Commonwealth. | | New South Wales. | Victoria. | Queensland. | South Australia | West Australia | Tasmania. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Upper House | 36 | 61 | 34 | 44 | 18 | 30 | 18 |
| Lower House | 75 | 90 | 65 | 72 | 42 | 50 | 35 |
| Total | 111 | 151 | 99 | 116 | 60 | 80 | 53 |

| Members in | Total of States of Commonwealth. | New Zealand. |
|---|---|---|
| Upper House | 241 | 45 |
| Lower House | 429 | 80 |
| | 670 | 125 |

Although there have been differences of opinion between the two Chambers in the ten years since the establishment of the Commonwealth, they have thus far not led to any open conflict, a compromise having in all cases been arrived at. It is clear that the disposition to compromise is promoted by the fact that a failure to agree involved the risk and expense of a new election for Senators as well as for members of the House of Representatives. It is probable that the division on the Budget in the House of Lords last November would have been somewhat less



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uncompromisingly anti-social if each "Backwoodsman" had to reckon his chance of re-election as part of the result of his vote.

The following is the section of the South African Constitution dealing with disagreements:

"63. If the House of Assembly passes any Bill and the Senate rejects or fails to pass it or passes it with amendments to which the House of Assembly will not agree, and if the House of Assembly in the next session again passes the Bill with or without any amendments which have been made or agreed to by the Senate and the Senate rejects or fails to pass it or passes it with amendments to which the House of Assembly will not agree, the Governor-General may during that session convene a joint sitting of the members of the Senate and House of Assembly. The members present at any such joint sitting may deliberate and shall vote together upon the Bill as last proposed by the House of Assembly and upon amendments, if any, which have been made therein by one House of Parliament and not agreed to by the other; and any such amendments which are affirmed by a majority of the total number of members of the Senate and House of Assembly present at such sitting shall be taken to have been carried, and if the Bill with the amendments, if any, is affirmed by a majority of the members of the Senate and House of Assembly present at such sitting, it shall be taken to have been duly passed by both Houses of Parliament: Provided that, if the Senate shall reject or fail to pass any Bill dealing with the appropriation of revenue or moneys for the public service, such joint sitting may be convened during the same session in which the Senate so rejects or fails to pass such Bill."

It will be observed that here the joint sitting of the two Chambers may be resorted to after a second rejection in a succeeding session without the previous dissolution of both Houses provided for in the Commonwealth Constitution; while it still further simplifies the process and renders it more expeditious in the case of Money Bills by providing for the joint sitting in the same session in which the rejection by the Senate takes place. The fact that the House of Assembly has 121 members as against 40 in the Senate gives the former that predominance in the last



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resort which is essential to the smooth working of a bicameral system in a democratic country.

From a practical standpoint this method of joint sessions, when employed under conditions similar to those established by the South African Constitution, would be better and more conclusive than that of Conferences between Committees of the two Chambers. A little consideration will show that the device of joint sessions simply means that the Lower House, to make its will prevail, must have a sufficient majority to vote down the resistance of the Upper Chamber. The same result could be achieved, however, by providing that, after the rejection of a Bill by the Lords, it could nevertheless be submitted for sanction to the Crown if reaffirmed in the House of Commons by a certain substantial majority, the number or proportion of which would be fixed by statute.

A provision of this character added to the resolutions of the Government would secure practically the same result as the suggested joint sessions with a reformed and numerically reduced House of Lords. It would, moreover, have the advantage of giving a freer hand in the reorganisation of the Upper Chamber, and of escaping a number of technical and practical difficulties. At the same time it would afford an effective safeguard for the minority of the electorate against any excessive use of power by the representatives in the House of Commons of a relatively small majority, which is the real object of those who desire a two-Chamber system for any other purpose than that of mere obstruction.



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# Germany and Holland

By Demetrius Boulger

WHILE the best-informed persons at both The Hague and Brussels agree in treating the alleged letter from the Emperor William II. to Queen Wilhelmina in 1904 as apocryphal, the discussion in the Dutch Chambers on Baron Heeckeren's question has drawn attention to the somewhat delicate and difficult position which Holland occupies in the European family, and before interest in the so-called incident has waned, it may be useful to contribute some pertinent information to the study of a question of recurring vitality and acuteness. It is many years since a French writer compared the relations of Germany and Holland to those of the wolf and Little Red Riding Hood in the fairy tale, but the little maiden still fares to the market unharmed, and the wolf has not yet shown his teeth. There is, perhaps, more risk in this case of the wolf being introduced as a friend and installed as protector of the family than of his forcing his way in by the indulgence of his voracity. At least such seem to be his own desire and expectation.

There is one essential fact that must be fully grasped and carefully remembered by those who endeavour to appreciate the present position and to predict the political future of Holland and its close neighbour and half-brother Belgium—for their fate cannot be dissevered—and this is that Holland is not a neutral State. I lay stress on this point because the *Post* of Berlin in a recent important article declared not merely that "Holland was a neutral State," but that "England had created her neutrality," and the article was extensively quoted in our Press without a line of correction anywhere. Without accuracy in facts it is difficult to see what profitable discussion can take place on grave political matters. The words of the *Post* apply with literal accuracy to



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Belgium, but not to Holland. What is the exact significance of the difference? It may be expressed thus: Holland possesses entire liberty of political action beyond her frontiers; in other words, she can conclude alliances; Belgium is restricted to the defence of her territory and neutrality, and if she were to make an alliance in anticipation of events she would commit *ipso facto* a breach of the engagements contracted in 1831 and finally ratified in 1839 as to her being "a permanently neutral State."

Let us now revert to the year 1904. It was the year of the Russo-Japanese War, and, so far as Holland was concerned, more specifically of the Dogger Bank incident, and of the problem of preserving Dutch neutrality at her ports in the Indian Archipelago during the passage eastwards of the Baltic fleet. The Dutch authorities had then some reason to be anxious, and the fact that England was the ally of Japan could not be overlooked in their calculations. Moreover, the feeling aroused by the Boer War, although waning, had not yet passed away, and those in the Chamber and the Press who preferred co-operation with England to union with Germany conceived it to be prudent to keep silent. The precautionary measures adopted by Holland in 1904 would, therefore, have been susceptible of an anti-English interpretation without attributing their origin to the sinister advice of the German Emperor. As a matter of fact Holland did take some steps in the direction of her military and naval defence in 1904, but they originated before that period in a general awakening of public opinion in Belgium as well as Holland to the fact that little States would have to fight for their independence and not trust to the forbearance of Great Powers to respect it.

What followed? In Holland the new law enforcing the conscription and abolishing the volunteer system, so far as the infantry was concerned, was put into force, and the practice of a partial mobilisation each year was adopted. The latter measure was restricted to the zone of Amsterdam's defensive position, which includes the command of the two channels of the Rhine near Arnhem and Nimeguen respectively. The same practice has been adopted ever since—the Dutch annual mobilisation being exclusively one to test the efficacy of the defence of



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the approaches to the commercial capital. There is no reason then to attach special importance to the mobilisation at Westerwoort-lez-Arnhem in the summer of 1904.

The possibility of a naval attack on Amsterdam from the side of the Zuyder Zee had, for some years before 1904, been present to the minds of Dutch military authorities, but curiously enough the general impression, in 1900 at least, was that Germany and not England might deliver such an attack. The efficiency of the defence of the Texel was challenged, and at the same time it was pointed out that there were no ships ready at a moment's notice to co-operate in the defence of the entrance to the Zuyder Zee. The consequence of this movement of public opinion was that the forts at the Helder received new and more powerful guns, and that an elaborate system of search-lights was installed. These precautionary measures were far advanced towards completion, if not actually completed by the end of 1903. The really important addition made in 1904 was in the matter of naval defence. In November of that year a measure was passed to the effect that there should be ready for active participation in the defence of the Zuyder Zee and the North Sea Canal a squadron of the minimum strength of six cruisers, and a large but unspecified number of torpedo boats. This step, which must be regarded as essential to the defence of Amsterdam against any attack, provides what may be called the modicum of fact in the present allegation that Holland adopted in the year named measures of defence which might be interpreted as directed against England.

We have seen what Holland did ; let us now turn to Belgium. In February 1904 an order was issued from the Belgian War Department that a commissioned officer should sleep every night in each of the eleven detached forts round Liége ; before that order officers of the day had always returned to the city as soon as their perfunctory duties allowed of their quitting the forts. Far more important than the adoption of precautionary measures at Liége was the decision arrived at in 1906 to complete the long unfinished outer circle of forts at Antwerp—the bulwark of Belgium's independence—and to rearm all the forts in that place with the newest and most powerful artillery. Antwerp



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is now fully equipped to resist attack and to fulfil the *rôle* assigned to it in the defence of Belgium.

But Belgian preparations were not restricted to these measures, which would have been of dubious effect with the skeleton battalions that represented the national army. The question of increasing and improving that army represented the next phase in the development of the question, and at last it was taken up in a serious spirit. A project for providing the country with an efficient force divided into two classes, one of 98,000 men for the defence of the three fortified positions of Antwerp, Liége, and Namur, and the other for the provision of a field army of 100,000 men with adequate reserves, was drawn up in 1904 by authority and freely distributed under the inspiring name of Groeninghe, which recalled the most famous Flemish victory. The whole country irrespective of party was stirred by the appeal.

Perhaps in a few years' time some one will make a pretended revelation that the impetus given to Belgian preparations which began in 1904 was due to external pressure. For the moment it seems more reasonable to assume that the Bill, finally passed into law last year, which embodies Groeninghe's scheme, was the outcome of the aroused consciousness of the Belgian nation as to their true position.

Many far-seeing Belgians, like the late General Brialmont and M. Emile Banning, had insisted on their country's need of greater military strength more than twenty years ago. Their voices were then " as of one crying in the wilderness," and it was with something of the bitterness of the unheeded prophet that Banning wrote : " A nation only loses its independence when it subscribes in advance to its own ruin."

I will now venture to summarise a few general conclusions. To tell the plain truth there is no great fear in Holland of German aggression. No one at The Hague believes that an incursion into the Netherlands forms part of German plans. Even the few who do not subscribe absolutely to this view limit their apprehensions to the province of Limburg, which intervenes between Germany and the undefended strip of Belgium east of Antwerp, and generally known as the Campine. Some Dutch thinkers also dread a silent absorption by Germany rather than an open



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aggression, and point as proof of their argument to the increase of German residents at both Amsterdam and Rotterdam, where the population is said with some exaggeration to be already half German. But the fear of a silent absorption never yet led a nation to take up seriously the questions of military reform and home defence.

Far different is the view in Belgium, where the fear of German aggression on the advent of any international trouble in Western Europe is acute. Rightly or wrongly, Belgian military men assign a very prominent place in the strategical plans of German Generals to an advance across Belgium, and so long as their army remained in a disorganised and lamentably weak condition they held that it would be futile to attempt to prevent it. But the recent organic changes are reviving a more hopeful feeling, and the pleasing theory is again coming into fashion that if Belgium is sufficiently strong to make a good fight in defence of the inviolability of her territory no one will dream of attacking her, and that in any collision between her powerful neighbours her neutrality will be as fully respected as it was in 1870.

Much has been written on the subject of Belgian neutrality promulgated by the Five Powers constituting the London Conference in 1831, accepted by Belgium at the time of her creation and recognition, and finally embodied in the treaties of 1839. This position did not exempt Belgium from the common duty of all States to provide for their own self-defence. Rather may it be said that it made the duty all the more incumbent upon her because she had to discharge her obligations to the guarantors as well as to herself.

Finally, with regard to the possibility of future co-operation between Holland and Belgium, a few words may be said. A most gratifying and encouraging approximation between the two peoples has been noticeable for the last ten years. It has become absolutely clear that the ill-will naturally engendered by the break-up of the old kingdom of the Netherlands in 1830–2 has passed away, and that Holland and Belgium are now reunited by the ties of brotherly sympathy which have not existed since the sixteenth century. Short of a military alliance no question arises nowadays between them that is not promptly settled to their



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mutual satisfaction. As to a defensive alliance, however, nothing can or will be done in the present phase of affairs. Belgium is debarred by her status as a neutral Power from concluding alliances. Holland, believing that she is in no danger of aggression, sees no necessity for making one, and if she ever were to depart from this passive attitude the alliances she would form would necessarily have to be with more powerful countries than Belgium. But the rapprochement of Holland and Belgium is none the less one of the most genuine and encouraging national movements visible in Europe at the present time, and its moral effect, reposing of course on proper military arrangements for home defence in each country, must contribute towards the safety of the whole of the old Netherlands.



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# Ecclesiastical Survivals in Divorce

By E. S. P. Haynes

The passionate reluctance of Englishmen to break with the past is nowhere more conspicuous than in the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857. That Act introduced the quite new principle of divorce *a vinculo* in the Law Courts, but preserved almost in their entirety the old ecclesiastical remedies and procedure side by side with divorce. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the new wine of divorce has almost completely burst the old bottles of ecclesiasticism. Suits for judicial separation are fast decreasing, and the suit for restitution of conjugal rights has paradoxically enough become a recognised stepping-stone to the dissolution of the marriage tie. The *status quo* bears about as close a relation to the ecclesiastical ideal as the mutilated law of real property to-day bears to the highly logical and symmetrical conveyancing of the period before 1845. Indeed, the ecclesiastical ideal was very definite and well reasoned, and it was certainly far less favourable to the separation of husband and wife than our present law is. For example, our present law differs from nearly every other in preserving the legal husk of the marriage tie where both parties are at fault and claim freedom. It unites them for ever (in law though not in fact) by the endearing tie of mutual injury. They are, no doubt, assumed (as Lord Stowell said in an old suit) to "find sources of mutual forgiveness in the humiliation of mutual guilt." "*Forsan et hæc meminisse juvabit*" was the caustic remark of Lord Hannen when he exhorted two spouses to return to each other after a successfully defended divorce suit. Unluckily, human beings are usually not so forgiving—especially when all their most intimate disputes have been ventilated in the newspapers. So far as our law is concerned, such persons are turned back again into the world



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irrevocably fettered to memories of misery and disgrace. Even if one wishes to return to the other the Court does not allow any suit for restitution of conjugal rights.

The old Canon Law differed widely from ours. It inculcated and enforced the Christian duty of forgiveness. According to the Decretals of Gregory IX. it was decided that if (*e.g.*) a husband obtained a separation from his wife on the ground of her adultery and subsequently erred himself the ecclesiastical court must force the husband under pain of excommunication to return to the wife. Again, up to 1884 our law retained the relics of the ecclesiastical machinery for enforcing the decree for restitution of conjugal rights. From their own point of view the Canon lawyers supported the interests of society and the family, but the decaying survivals of the Canon Law in our own day are nothing but a fantastic mockery of all that they were once designed to represent. Anglican dignitaries and others who uphold the *status quo* seem to be quite ignorant of all this and suggest no alternative solution of the problem.

Since 1857 the suit for restitution of conjugal rights is only adopted by the wife either as a money demand or as a genteel preliminary to a divorce which is presumably not unwelcome to either party. For a husband it is since 1884 of no use at all. It may never have been of much use, yet Greville relates a romantic tale of the early nineteenth century in which the wife was according to the ecclesiastical traditions compelled to return to her husband, and a happy marriage subsequently justified the litigious pertinacity which carried him up to the House of Lords. Moreover, in these days no judge would grant a decree of restitution to one of two guilty spouses, though on the other hand their mutual guilt equally debars them from divorce.

The mediæval church appears always to have been eager to presume marriage wherever possible, and to enforce the cohabitation of husband and wife, in spite of a decided laxity in annulling marriage for reasons which appear oddly frivolous to the modern student. This very laudable anxiety to promote reconciliation instead of separation without remarriage to some extent harmonises the view of the mediæval church with that of the modern State. I cannot imagine any Canonist contem-



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plating with satisfaction our English encouragement of separation deeds and separation orders or the activities of the King's Proctor, who is employed by the State to prevent the divorce of guilty couples but does nothing whatever to bring them together again.

The King's Proctor, whom I wish only to criticise in his strictly official capacity, has become almost a fetish of the English mind, though his activities in divorce date only from 1860. The contemplation of the guilt of the persons who fall victims to his espionage appears to blind the average newspaper editor to the grave considerations of public policy involved in the question. I desire to record that the *Westminster Gazette* has alone done me the honour of printing a letter on the subject, though I have written to many other journals. Yet the official proceedings of the King's Proctor are condemned as mischievous when successful, and productive of great hardship when unsuccessful, by every lawyer and layman with whom I have ever discussed the subject.

The *raison d'être* of the King's Proctor is to detect collusion and the concealment of material facts from the Court with a view to preventing divorce by consent and to enforcing the doctrine of recrimination. In practice, however, the King's Proctor very rarely intervenes to prevent collusion—an offence which no person need commit who is wealthy enough to obtain skilled advice on the subject—and in order to obtain a decent proportion of successful interventions, he has to employ most of his time in investigating the malicious gossip and tittle-tattle of the poorer classes, who enjoy less privacy than the rich and cannot afford the luxury of surreptitious trips on the Continent. Hence a poor man who has saved money for years to obtain a divorce often finds that he cannot get his decree made absolute without having to rebut a whole series of charges ranging back, as in one recent case, more than twenty years. Moreover, in nearly every case he is debarred, even if he succeeds, from recovering costs against the King's Proctor. This in nine cases out of ten spells financial ruin. If he is guilty he is forced back into a concubinage which can only be outwardly respectable in the event of his contriving to escape gossip and blackmail. The same remarks hold good in the case of a wife, except that she is



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faced with the possibility of prostitution as well as the probability of concubinage.

It is always difficult to prove a negative, but, so far as I can ascertain, the ecclesiastical court before 1857 had no extra-judicial machinery for detecting collusion or enforcing recrimination, and even in 1857 it was thought that the hearing of every case by three judges would be a sufficient safeguard. The reasons for this are fairly obvious. It was not difficult for the parties to separate voluntarily, and towards the end of the eighteenth century the device of separation deeds began to grow up. If we omit financial considerations, neither party had very much to gain from a separation, and a deed was obviously preferable since a victorious petitioner who had not the means to obtain an Act of Parliament had to give a bond for at least £100 to live chastely after the decree. This bond was presumably done away with by the statutory divorce if a private act was subsequently obtained. Certain precautions, however, were taken in the House of Lords. The petitioner had to attend for examination at the Bar of the House on the second reading of the Bill, and the witnesses again gave evidence to prove the adultery.

Probably the principal safeguard against collusion in the Ecclesiastical Courts was the fact that a guilty party benefited financially by successful recrimination. Where the parties were in agreement on financial matters they were more than likely to be content with a separation deed. In this way the guilty party had a direct interest in bringing a countercharge, and this is still the case in Scotland, where the guilt of both parties only touches the question of finance and does not affect the dissolution of the marriage tie. Such a condition of things happily relieves the State from undertaking duties of an unpleasantly inquisitorial and detective nature.

The question of collusion naturally gave rise to much discussion in 1857, and, as I said before, it was enacted that three judges should try each suit. This caused such arrears in other work that the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1860, was passed to give the King's Proctor (who had previously existed as a Probate Official) or any other person power to intervene, after a decree *nisi* had been granted, to show cause why the said decree should



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not be made absolute "by reason of the same having been obtained by collusion or by reason of material facts not brought before the Court." The Bill was introduced in the Lords, who, much to the scandal of the Commons, inserted a clause that the King's Proctor should be reimbursed by the Treasury for any deficiency of costs.

I am informed by my friend, Mr. Freke Palmer, that the King's Proctor used to intervene much more frequently than now, and that the resulting scandal led to a provision in the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1878, that the King's Proctor might be mulcted in costs, but he was by the same Act entitled to apply to the Treasury for payment of these costs. Under this Act the taxpayer is still responsible for the mistake of the King's Proctor and the successful petitioner can only recover his costs by showing that the intervention was "unreasonable," which is far from easy to do. The system is not likely to encourage caution on the part of the King's Proctor.

It seems scarcely necessary to recapitulate the evils of the present law on this point, ranging, as they do, from grave hardship to individuals to the most important questions of public interest. It should not be difficult to suggest a better alternative.

The main questions are those of collusion and recrimination. Mr. Justice Bargrave Deane has defined collusion as an "*active* agreement" of the parties to procure a divorce. The clearest cases are (1) that of a husband committing two matrimonial offences in order to be free of his wife with her concurrence, (2) that of either party bribing the other into an agreement not to defend or not to raise countercharges.

It is clear not only that such cases are almost impossible to prevent if both parties are of the same mind and act discreetly, but also that the Attorney-General, as in Scotland, would be quite as competent as the King's Proctor to intervene in cases of open scandal. In a limited sense divorce by consent must always exist. All that can be done is to make the process as much of an obstacle race as possible. The compulsion of one party to commit a matrimonial offence and the legal prohibition of any active agreement between the parties create a substantial



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deterrent against the parties rashly and unadvisedly embarking on so grave a step, or against one discontented spouse making life so intolerable for the other as to bring about a consent that is, in its origin, more one-sided than mutual.

On the other hand, the doctrine of recrimination is undoubtedly anti-social and mischievous in so far as it stands in the way of such marriages being dissolved. Moreover, the present system directly induces the suppression of material facts because the parties, in their anxiety to be rid of each other, have every motive to suppress countercharges. It also involves grievous hardship to the citizen and unnecessary expense to the State. But the adoption of the Scottish system would give each party a financial motive for bringing all the facts before the Court, and this of itself would minimise the evils of clandestine collusion. The doctrine of coming to the Court "with clean hands" applies very sensibly to financial disputes but not to the public policy of divorce. The maintenance of the present system is neither logical nor expedient either according to ecclesiastical or civil notions.

For similar reasons it would be well to abolish the restitution suit now that it has lost all its old meaning. If either party consistently refuses to consort with the other such refusal should constitute the offence of desertion and should be established by evidence instead of by obsolete procedure.

It seems also inexpedient to allow separation as a remedy. If two spouses agree to live apart because they object to divorce as a remedy there is nothing to prevent them from doing so. But I cannot see why the law should assist them to live apart while still married if one of them subsequently changes his or her mind. Similarly I fail to see why either spouse should have the option of separation or divorce as a remedy. If the essential conditions of marriage are frustrated and either party has good legal cause to be rid of the other, the law ought to grant divorce or nothing. If the injured party does not want divorce, then there remains the choice either of enduring for one reason or another the burden of an unhappy marriage, perhaps the noblest form of self-sacrifice that can be imagined, or of agreeing to live apart without any legal protection from molestation. But so



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long as our laws sanction separation without possibility of re-marriage so long we shall continue to multiply irregular unions and to witness the misery and crime resulting from them, to say nothing of unnecessary illegitimacy. Even under the present law, bigamy and concubinage have ceased to be as common among the well-to-do classes as they were before 1857. The same cannot be said of the classes who cannot afford divorce. But in all classes alike the establishment of a cheap and reasonable divorce law would raise the whole ideal of marriage, and it would add incalculably to the welfare and happiness of the nation. The existing state of things is indefensible; it has none of the merits, and nearly all the defects, of the Canon Law.



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# Jean Moréas

## By Lalla Vandervelde

UNTIL quite a short time ago, any one entering the Café Vachette —the most celebrated of the *cafés d'étudiants* in Paris—late at night or early in the morning, would have seen Jean Moréas, seated at a table, holding forth to a host of admirers, of whom Francis Jammes, Déodat de Séverac, Bernard Grasset, Léon Lafage, and Achille Richard were the most assiduous. As a young man, he was to the admiring eyes of the Quartier Latin a handsome stranger, very gallant, rather impertinent, with his blue-black moustache at which he was continually pulling, his eye-glass and flowered buttonhole. His elegance was proverbial. "*Lorsque je me sentais fatigué*," he wrote, after the publication of *Les Syrtes*, his first volume of poems, "*je sortais et j'allais au hasard, en macfarlane fashionable, et ganté de blanc, cherchant à rassembler mes chimères.*" In the last years of his life, Moréas lived at Montrouge, near the fortifications, and used, after having spent the night at a *café*, to ride home by tramcar early in the morning.

> Encore sur le pavé sonne mon pas nocturne ;
> O Paris, tu me vois marcher
> A l'heure ou l'on entend, dans l'ombre taciturne,
> La charrette du maraîcher.

With Moréas vanishes one of the last representatives of literature who frequented the *cafés* of the "Boul' Mich." In one of them Verlaine wrote his most beautiful poems, seated at the dirty little marble table with its characteristic pile of saucers. Musset, to go further back, "courted his Muse over a glass of absinthe." And poor Catulle Mendès, who died so tragically last year, was to be seen, night after night, at the same table talking himself into inspiration.



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"*Je suis un Baudelaire avec plus de couleur*," said Moréas, with his curiously metallic, rather impertinent voice. Though not a Frenchman, it cannot be said that his accent was foreign; it was peculiar and very personal. He was not a Baudelaire; he was Jean Moréas, who, some thirty-five years ago, came from Athens to Paris to become a French poet.

Jean Papadiamantopoulos—this was his real name—was born at Athens in 1856. Several of his ancestors played glorious parts in the Wars of Independence. A governess taught him French and he liked to tell his friends that, in his father's house, there were two thousand volumes of French poetry which so fired his enthusiasm that, even when quite a child, he decided to be a French poet. When still very young, he came to Paris and changed his name, which would have appeared ridiculous to the Parisians. He only went back to Greece twice, once at the time of the war, in 1897, and a second time in 1904, when his *Iphigénie* was played in the Stadium at Athens. However, he did not lose touch with his native land, and only became a naturalised Frenchman a few months ago. It is little known that, between 1873 and 1878, he published translations, essays, and more especially poems, in the Greek language.

Moréas was a poet who was imbued with a passionate desire for perfection in expression, and his relentless self-criticism, combined with an instinctive feeling for form, very often enabled him to realise his aspirations. It was this thirst for perfect beauty of form and expression which caused the continual changes in his poetic career. A poem was hardly published before he disowned it, and each new book of poems marked an advance on the previous one. *Les Syrtes* (1884), though influenced by Gautier and Baudelaire, and *Les Cantilènes* (1886) classed Moréas amongst the Symbolists, whose great champions were Verlaine and Mallarmé. He was noisily acclaimed as the new Symbolist—he himself wrote articles setting forth his poetic creeds, which were eagerly read by his adherents and regarded as the exegesis of the new poetry.

These poems from *Les Syrtes* are characteristic:



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" REMEMBRANCES." IV

Hautes sierras aux gorges nues,
Lacs d'émeraude, lacs glacés,
Isards sur des crêtes dressés,
Aigles qui planez par les nues ;

Sapins sombres aux larges troncs,
Fondrières de l'Entécade
Où chante la fraîche cascade
Derrière les rhododendrons ;

Et vous, talus plantée d'yeuses,
Irai-je encore par les sentiers,
Mêlant les rouges églantiers
A la pâleur des scabieuses ?

Dans les massifs emplis de geais
Mènerai-je à la brune
La jeune belle à la peau brune,
Au pied mignon, à l'œil de jais ?

CONTE D'AMOUR. XI

La feuille des forêts
Qui tourne dans la bise
Là-bas, par les guérets,
La feuille des forêts
Qui tourne dans la bise,
Va-t-elle revenir
Verdir—la même tige ?

L'eau claire des ruisseaux
Qui passe claire et vive
A l'ombre des berceaux,
L'eau claire des ruisseaux
Qui passe claire et vive,
Va-t-elle retournée
Baigner—la même rive ?

*Les Cantilènes* are more varied. They contain popular French legends, poems inspired by Edgar Allan Poe and others, of an extraordinary sweetness, in which Moréas begins to show his own personality :

Sous vos longues chevelures, petites fées,
Vous chântates sur mon sommeil bien doucement,
Sous vos longues chevelures, petites fées,
Dans la forêt du charme et de l'enchantement.



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Dans la forêt du charme et des merveilleux rites,
Gnomes compatissants pendant que je dormais,
De votre main, honnêtes gnomes, vous m'offrîtes
Un sceptre d'or, hélas ! pendant que je dormais.

J'ai su depuis ce temps que c'est mirage et leurre
Les sceptres d'or et les chansons dans la forêt ;
Pourtant, comme un enfant crédule, je les pleures,
Et je voudrais dormir encor dans la forêt.

Qu'importe si je sais que c'est mirage et leurre.

When Moréas published *Le Pélerin passionné*, in 1890, his admirers gave him a banquet which has remained famous in the annals of French literature, and Anatole France, in an article which appeared in the *Temps*, wrote a flattering appreciation of the *Pélerin*.

In publishing this new work, Moréas had disowned *Les Syrtes* and *Les Cantilènes*. What was the horror and disgust of his admirers and followers when, two years after the publication of the *Pélerin*, a new edition of it appeared eliminating certain portions (they were edited separately as a little volume entitled *Autant en emporte le vent*), adding fresh material (*Gnome au clair visage*, &c.) which, provisionally, he considered was much superior. The new portions were written in flamboyant style, full of archaisms of mythology, and to understand them a glossary would sometimes be useful :

ÉGLOGUE À FRANCINE

O Francine sade, ceuille
De tes doigts si bien appris,
La rose, moite en sa feuille,
Le lys qui n'a pas de prix !
Des champs et des verts pourpris
La fleurante nouveauté,
Las, demain aura été.

N'as-tu pas fleurante pomme
O Francine de renom,
Et tant frétillarde, comme
Tourterelle en sa saison !
Bientôt tu n'auras foison
De plaisance, chef doré,
Ni visage coloré.



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Or, ainsi, belle Francine,
Faisant nargue à vos foleurs,
Sénestre je vaticine
Toutes sortes de malheurs,
En me couronnant de fleurs,
Sifflant de pastoraux airs
Dans mes chalumeaux diserts.

Shortly after, Moréas, with Charles Maurras, Hugues Rebell, &c., founded the *École romane* and abjured Symbolism. At this period of his life, Moréas was mistrusted and treated as a renegade by his former admirers and imitators, and was regarded with suspicion also by the classical school of poets. For, although he had partly reverted to tradition and sought inspiration in classical subjects and models, he was at the same time influenced by Ronsard, Villon, Joachim du Bellay, &c. As Anatole France had attempted in his novels, such as *Jérome Coignard* and *La Rôtisserie de la Reine Pédanque*, so Moréas wished to enrich the French language and to resuscitate the forms of poetry used by the *Pléiade*.

His next volume, *Les Stances* (1899 and 1901), is considered his masterpiece. In a series of short poems, composed of one, two, or three quatrains, which are linked together and in reality form only one poem, we find the perfection of Ronsard's or of Bellay's sonnets without any imitation whatever, for Moréas's language is his own and his varied experiments all went to making it strong, simple, and clear. "*Les poèmes*," says Rémy de Gourmont, "*presque tous parfaits, ont eu leur influence sur la poésie française, et une influence heureuse. Nous avions besoin d'une riche simplicité. C'est l'art suprême. Elle nous y a conduits peu à peu. Mais on n'y est arrivé, comme Moréas lui-même, qu'après mille détours.*" In *Les Stances* Moréas expresses the resignation of the philosopher who has learnt to judge persons and events dispassionately :

Rompant soudain le deuil de ces jours pluvieux
Sur les grands marronniers qui perdent leur couronne,
Sur l'eau, sur le tardif parterre et dans mes yeux
Tu verses ta douceur, pâle soleil d'automne.

Soleil, que nous veux-tu ? Laisses tomber la fleur,
Que la feuille pourrisse et que le vent l'emporte !
Laisse l'eau s'assombrir, laisse moi ma douleur
Qui nourrit la pensée et qui fait l'âme forte.



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And again :

Ne dites pas : La vie est un joyeux festin ;
Ou c'est d'un esprit sot ou c'est d'une âme basse.
Surtout ne dites point : Elle est malheur sans fin ;
C'est d'un mauvais courage et qui trop tôt se lasse.

Riez comme au printemps s'agitent les rameaux,
Pleurez comme la bise ou le flot sur la grève,
Goûtez tous les plaisirs et souffrez tous les maux
Et dites : C'est beaucoup, et c'est l'ombre d'un rêve.

*Iphigénie* is a neo-classic tragedy in five acts, which was first performed in the open-air theatre of Orange in August 1903, at the Théâtre de l'Odéon (Paris) in December of the same year, and at Athens in 1904. It will be played by the Comédie française within a few months. Silvain, the tragedian, who has played the part of Agamemnon in both Racine's and Moréas's *Iphigénie*, has expressed the following opinion on the two plays to Jules Claretie, director of the Comédie française :

" *'L'Iphigénie' de Racine est une jeune princesse qui, dans les plus beaux vers du monde, soupire les sentiments les plus exquis et fait entendre de son immortelle voix les plaintes les plus touchantes. 'L'Iphigénie' de Moreas est—comment dirai-je ?—une sorte de Jeanne d'Arc hellène qui donne des leçons à Achille lui-même avant de mourir pour son pays.*"

Original in his tragedy as he had been in his poems, Moréas has not followed the example of Corneille or of Racine. Their regular alexandrines engender a certain monotony. Moréas has brought back to us the variety of the Greek drama and has made an epic of a tragedy. At the same time, as Sophocles, Homer, and Virgil have influenced him much more than the French dramatists, the continual changes of rhythms and of metre, and the contrast between the lyric and the dramatic element all go to make his *Iphigénie* " divine " in the Platonic sense.

O fils d'Agamemnon, eh quoi, tu dors ? Écoute .
Le mouvement du char l'a fatigué sans doute.
Ouvre, ouvre, mon enfant, tes yeux pleins de douceur,
Ouvre-les et souris aux noces de ta sœur.

The following lines, spoken by the chorus, are in the style of the *Pléïade* :

Heureux celui qui, retenu
Dans la pudeur et la mesure,



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En aimant n'a jamais connu
Qu'un bonheur qui paisible dure.

Eros au visage charmant
De son arc deux traits jumeaux tire :
Le premier blesse doucement,
L'autre cause un affreux délire.

These lines may serve as an example of Moréas's lyricism :

Mon père, en ce moment, que n'ai-je l'éloquence
De ce chanteur harmonieux
Qui charmait les rochers ? Mais pour toute science
Je n'ai que les pleurs de mes yeux.

Malgré moi, j'ai senti ma force défaillante
Et j'approche de tes genoux
Comme fait de l'autel la blanche suppliante.
Hélas ! que le soleil est doux !

And the following chorus is nobly dramatic :

Quel plectre anime ainsi les cithares sonores ?
Quel souffle a traversé le pertuis des roseaux ?
Sur le haut Pélion, montagne des Centaures,
Tous les antiques pins bruissent comme des eaux.
Les filles de Mnémosyne,
De Zeus la race divine,
Les Muses aux noirs sourcils,
Vont célébrant la journée
Qui consomme l'hyménée
De Pélée et de Thétis.

Jean Moréas died on March 30, 1910. At his funeral M. Barthou, Minister of Justice, spoke in the name of the French Government, Maurice Barrès as one of his oldest friends, and M. Jules Claretie as director of the Comédie française, by which Moréas did not have the joy of seeing his play performed.

M. Claretie relates that, a few days before Moréas's death, Silvain, who, with his wife, the actress, Louise Silvain, and several of Moréas's friends were seated round his bed, recalled one of his poems which ends thus :

Sophocle m'a parlé !

" Do say these lines," said Moréas to Silvain, who answered : " I would—willingly—if I could only remember the first line."

There was a pause. Then, with the voice of a dying man, Moréas murmured these words : " *A cette heure* . . ."



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The tragedian continued immediately :

A cette heure où le soir tombe du ciel et plane
Et frémit doucement dans l'ombre du platane,
De roses enroulé,
Pendant que je songeais, l'esprit plein d'amertume,
Des bords où le Céphise en se brisant écume,
Sophocle m'a parlé !

They were the last words he heard : they form a fitting epitaph.



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